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No. 52
October 1997

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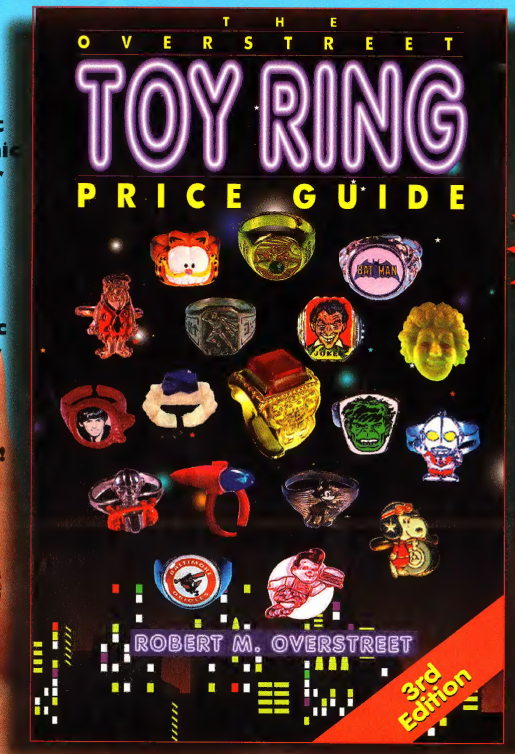


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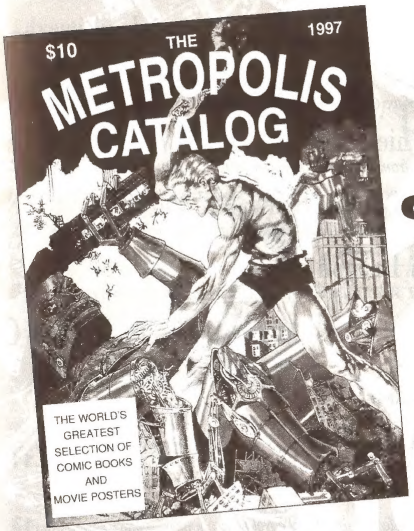


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# CONTENTS

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## FEATURES

**No Gurls Allowed!**
*Was the legendary Justice Society really just a Boys' Club? by Jack Curtin* ..... **18**

**Esoteric Archie!**
*A look at those lesser-known Archie titles! by Paul Castiglia* ..... **23**

**Golden Girls!**
*The greatest super heroines of the Golden Age! by Ray Connell* ..... **28**

**Everything's Archie!**
*The inside story on the gang from Riverdale High! by Jeffrey C. Branch* ..... **32**

**The Many Lives of Julius Schwartz! Part III**
*Testimonials from Gil Kane, Paul Levitz, Mark Evanier, and more! by Pat S. Calhoun* ... **53**

**Atom Bombs and Dragon's Eyes!**
*From Capt. Midnight to Capt. Video, premium rings are way cool! by Benn Ray* ..... **68**

## COLUMNS

**Adventures Into Weird Words**
*Three Terrific Twos! by Pat S. Calhoun* ..... **11**

**Nolan's Notebook**
*The Bad, the Strange, and the Sleazy! by Michelle Nolan* ..... **13**

**ACG Chronicles**
*A Silver Age short-run...Midnight Mystery! by Rolf Gerdau* ..... **64**

**The Schiffman Report**
*Investors are still out there! by Matt Schiffman* ..... **70**

**Fandom Flashbacks**
*Soupy Sales...that's right, Booby!* ..... **80**

*Volume 2 • Number 52*
*October 1997*
*A Gemstone Publication*

**DEPARTMENTS**

Letter from the Editor ....4
Marketplace Mail .....6
Market Reports .....70
Back Issues .....73
Coming Next Issue .....75
Advertising Info. .....76
Subscription Service .....77
Special Announcement ..IBC

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**ON THE COVER:** An original drawing by Archie legend Dan DeCarlo.

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# Pricing Update News!

As soon as the news about *Overstreet's FAN* suspending publication was announced, I was besieged with questions, all asking, "How are we going to get updated Overstreet prices between editions of the annual *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*?" Few events in recent memory have caused such a stir among *CBM* readers. And not being in the *Price Guide* "loop" anymore, I confess I didn't have the answer.

I did know that, as a collector, I too was interested in getting price updates more often than yearly... plus I was curious about the recent price fluctuations in the Silver Age, Bronze Age, and Modern Age markets. So I joined the chorus of collectors and dealers from all over the country asking for updated Overstreet pricing in some form or another.

It turns out that during that same time period, Bob Overstreet, Benn Ray, Jeff Vaughn and the rest of the Gemstone-Maryland gang were taking a nationwide survey of comic shops as well as canvassing collectors and sellers at the San Diego and Chicago conventions... asking if they, too, wanted updated pricing. After reviewing the feedback (provided via a tremendous number of onsite interviews, phone calls, letters, and e-mail), the consensus was overwhelmingly in favor of the idea... and so the decision was made to provide a Silver Age/Bronze Age/Modern Age *Overstreet Price Update* to meet the voluminous requests. That decision was music to my ears!

But there's even more good news... Gemstone will be placing the *Price Update* (as an insert) into *CBM*'s "Special Holiday Issue" on sale in November. Not only will the *CBM* #54 package feature the collector-oriented articles, interviews, graphics and Golden Age/Silver Age emphasis you've come to expect and the special *Price Guide* insert... it will also contain a special tribute to Captain America, Daredevil, and the "Marvel Age" of comics PLUS a few extra surprises! *CBM* #54 is sure to intrigue, enlighten, and excite anyone who is serious about the hobby of comic book collecting! I realize that *CBM* #54 is still two issues away, but I just couldn't contain my excitement about the issue any longer and so decided to "leak the news" to fandom one month early... right here on this page!

So don't wait, make a beeline to your favorite comic shop–if you aren't already there right now–and tell them to reserve your copy of *CBM* #54. Tell your local dealer "Gary sent me!" (He'll of course say "Gary who?" but that won't matter... reserve your copy anyway.)

'Til next month, may you fill the holes on your want list!

Best Gary

Gary

P.S. Oh, just one more thing. While you're sitting back and enjoying the great selection of articles in this "Back To School" issue (featuring a brand new Dan DeCarlo-drawn cover gag featuring the Mile High copies of *Pep* #22 and *Archie* #1), pull up Gemstone's web site at **www.gemstonepub.com.** It's a great place to get in on announcements, upcoming events, late-breaking information, a *CBM* cover gallery, and even comic-related articles! I invite you to send your comments and questions right from the web site!


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### Hail to the King

Congratulations to CBM on reaching its landmark 50th issue! Dedicating the issue to Julius Schwartz was a very fitting tribute to a tremendous contributor to the world of comics.

One of the experiences I can relay involving Mr. Schwartz took place at the 1996 Ramapo Comic Con. Upon my presenting The Amazing World of DC Comics "Julius Schwartz" issue to him for his autograph, Julius began leafing through it. When he came to the 1935 picture of him during his youth from the sci-fi club (the same photo is shown on CBM #50, p.30), he immediately jumped out of his chair, and dragged me and the magazine to show his fellow old-time comics pros. Mr. Schwartz wanted to prove to anyone who would listen that 1) he was in fact young at one time, and 2) used to have more hair. I then told him to borrow the issue and bring it back to me when he was through. Sure enough, he returned it signed as requested about a half-hour later. He did, however, take it back several times to show his story to new faces that would pass him by. Julius was also very kind that day to my wife Joanne and infant son Nicholas (it was his first comics show).

Julius Schwartz is not only a tremendous goodwill ambassador for DC Comics, he is also a walking reminder to everyone of what was great about the old DC. Not only do we still have our back issues to reflect upon, we also have the man who was synonymous with that era in comics history, Julius Schwartz.

Looking forward to the next 50.

Paul Stefanowicz, New Jersey

### Tennessee Bat-fan

What could I not like about your special Batman issue (CBM #49)? To this longtime Bat-fan (37 years and counting!) it was like manna from heaven! From the beautiful cover by Infantino and Anderson to all the great articles, this is my favorite CBM issue yet!

Michelle Nolan's "The Unexplored Batman" was clearly my favorite. I too feel that the postwar stories in Detective were some of the best written. Possibly because it was their flagship title the editors put the better stories there. Even the covers look better to me. Request for Michelle: How about an article exploring the New Look Batman (before "camp" took over) in Detective Comics? I feel that they were some of the best written and drawn comics EVER!

I hate David T. Alexander and Robert Kiefer! How dare they whet my appetite for Star Spangled Comics #88-94?! Now I'll have to cough up the cash and try to find these underrated gems! Being a Batman collector sure is an expensive (but, oh so rewarding) hobby!

I loved "Touring Gotham with Bob Kane." However, I wish he would have visited my old neighborhood in Hell's Kitchen when I was a kid. I was probably the biggest Bat-fan in the 'hood!

The Jim Aparo interview just proved to me that the man is as rock-solid as his artwork has been for the last 30 years. One cannot think of the best Batman comics during that time without Mr. Aparo's name coming up! I pray he continues to draw the Darknight Detective for a long time to come!

Thanks, CBM, for such a great issue. I triple-dog-dare you to revisit the rich history of Batman and Robin in the not too distant future!

As for CBM #50, you couldn't have started off better than with a great Murphy Anderson cover but this time it was outshone by the great articles within. I am amazed at the wealth of information you guys dig up! At some point in the future I think you should compile your articles on the history of comics and their creators and publish it in book form, for it would be more scholarly and entertaining than anything else since Steranko's books.

Speaking of books, I wish DC would reprint stories from their vast vaults and put them in

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moderately priced soft cover editions like they did their "Greatest Stories" series a few years back. I have to believe there are many fans like myself who would like to see the best of the Golden and Silver Ages reprinted in an affordable format with each issue devoted to a single character or theme–the '90's version of the 80 page giants! Of course, the highlight of the issue was the spotlight on Julie Schwartz. But I ask: What would have happened to comic history had he not existed?

Perhaps: 1) The Comics Code might have made the whole industry go under (with the possible exception of "funny animal" books). 2) The Silver Age might not have happened. Without the Justice League existing, Martin Goodman never would have told Stan Lee to create his own superhero group (the F.F.). The "Marvel Age of Comics" would still be a dream of Stan's. 3) After Marvel's failed experiment of reviving their heroes in the '50s, DC may have been reluctant to revive theirs and risk the same failure. 4) After years of battling aliens, it was revealed that Batman and Robin were aliens themselves and Superman chucked it all one day and moved to Kandor!

Thank you Mr. Schwartz for the very best comics in my life and thank you Mr. Carter for bringing out this very special issue.

Eric G. Blackmore, Tennessee

### Mad Mona Writes Again

Enjoyed the wonderful Batman issue (#49) very much. Throughout the years this particular icon has, is, and will always be my number one hero. Those covers of Star Spangled Comics featuring Robin brought back memories. A while back there was a team up crossover between both DC and Marvel comics of Batman and Captain America.

The '50s was a weak point of space and alien stories. Carmine Infantino and especially the great Neal Adams and Dick Giordano artwork was terrific on Batman.

Any chance to cover Syd Shores who drew Captain America? Syd was really great. CBM is my monthly treat–each issue is terrific.

Mad Mona, Texas

*We're shopping for a Syd Shores interview right now! We also have a great Captain America/Daredevil issue coming in CBM #54 (on sale in November). That issue also features the Overstreet Price Guide update, so it ought to be a blockbuster!*

### Letter from Rio!

CBM is such a good magazine, I don't want to miss an issue of it–please inform me as soon as my subscription is about end so I can renew at once.

Suggestions? Yes, I'd like to make some. Please try to get good articles on Tom & Jerry, Bugs, Bunny and Little Lulu, in their Golden Age. John Stanley and Irving Tripp are surely worth the efforts of good research, and as for Tom and Jerry and Bugs Bunny, their stories and drawings were wonderful in the '40s and '50s, funny and full of energy, and there's surely a lot of people fond of them. Unfortunately, they are some way forgotten (I mean their writers and artists) when it comes to a comics research, always playing second fiddle to the great Carl Barks and other better known creators. Pity, they are great too, perhaps you guys could try to make justice to them! Thank you very much.

Jose Marcio C. Costa, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

*I love every name and character you mentioned and would love to publish articles on them… if only we had them! Maybe you could write an article about Bugs comics collectors in Brazil called "The Rabbit from Ipanema"? just a thought…*

### Everybody Loves Archie

I hope that things have been going well for CBM since my last correspondence. I know one thing for sure, Comic Book Marketplace has been putting out some great issues so more people must be reading it each month. Keep up the good work. One of the items that I would like to discuss is the sense of wonderment that I get out of each issue that I read and credit needs to go out to your writers who consistently create this "sense of wonder," article after article, issue after issue. In my opinion, that is what keeps me coming back each month for more of that magic.

I would like to share some of this magic with you if you will allow me. My involvement with comics has to be credited to my now 13 year old daughter, Danielle. When we first got started going to our neighborhood comic book store and then to the comic book conventions, she became an aficionado of the Archie comic book family, along with Betty, Veronica, Jughead and Reggie.


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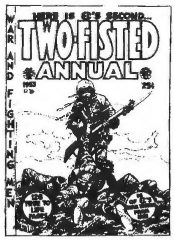


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She came under Archie's spell–The Mirth of a Nation. We were reading all the current titles as they came out but then we started to go into the back issue bins to look for titles that we didn't have. We were never alone in our quest for these prized books. Besides being the only girl at the local comic book store, she was a rare sight at the usual all-male comic book convention. But this obstacle never diminished Danielle in her quest for those unread titles. Many of the comic vendors got to know and remember me not so much by who I was, but rather I was the father who accompanied his daughter to the shows. Presently, Danielle has about six long comic book boxes filled with Archie titles.

One of the nice things about comic book reading and collecting is that it strengthened the relationship between myself and my daughter. After we got our quota of books, she couldn't wait to read her books to me. Never did I have to worry about the story line, off color language, excessive violence, or nudity that we often find in the current titles being published.

Danielle did read each and every one of those books to me and she would remember the story in each of the books as well as each of the covers of the many titles. This remarkable feat helped us from purchasing duplicates of titles that we already had. When the Archie family came to town for one of the big conventions, we carefully picked the books that we wanted the artists to sign. I must publicly thank all the writers and artists (of the Archie family) who helped make my daughter a very happy girl after each of these signings. In addition to searching out Archie titles, we did some research on the origin of Archie and how he and his friends have evolved over the years–their wholesomeness and humor has remained a constant theme and attraction to all the readers over the years.

Another important fact that needs to be remembered is that my daughter and I have met a lot of very nice people over the years who just happened to be selling comic books. Not only did they take an interest in what books we were reading, but they also took an interest in us personally. I feel that this is a rare item in today's place of business. There was one particular store owner that always went out of his way to put aside Archies for my daughter. His store was always a safe haven for friends to gather or share interesting tales as we looked over the latest acquisition of Golden and Silver Age titles to come in. If you are ever in New York, stop by

Roger's Comics on West 14th Street. He'll be glad to hear from you.

So no matter what anybody says about comics, I'll never forget the hours of joy and happiness that they brought me and my daughter and I hope that this will be something that she can share with her children. Thanks for letting me share with you and your readers.

Dennis A. Brennan, New York

### When was the Silver Age?

Whilst trying to wangle the time to get down to San Dee, I wanted to finally get these thoughts off to CBM, hopefully to provoke some dialogue.

I love the ongoing discussion of What Age Began (or Ended) When and What Shall We Call It...and of course I have my own ideas on the subject....

To my mind, the two absolutely definitive factors in what we today call the Silver Age of comics were (1) the superhero renaissance and, perhaps most importantly, (2) the rise of comics fandom, which was sparked by the former and ultimately gave the juice to it. It seems to me that the big Silver Age boom was only able to occur thanks to the new inter-active group of fans that were nurtured along by fanzines and the letter columns of Julius Schwartz and others who were willing to print addresses and to actively encourage fan activity in so many other ways. This new fan growth, however, had its own seeds in the new reformation of Golden Age characters such as the Flash, Green Lantern, and the Justice Society. It was the act of resurrecting the heroes who were familiar to nostalgic older fans and collectors that gave such a shot of adrenaline to the whole movement. For that reason, I feel that the sentiment that Showcase #4 is the first Silver Age comic is right on. I don't think that the introduction of J'onn J'onzz in and of itself would have had much of an effect. The rebirth of Flash, on the other hand, represented the birth of a concept. And isn't that what we measure by what we call historical "Ages"—not a particular span of time so much as a span of a new idea?

Following this line of logic, I feel that not all comics that were published after Showcase #4 are necessarily Silver Age comics. Do the various Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman titles, for example, automatically become Silver Age titles after October 1956? I think not. Nor would I consider the last Quality titles that ran until the end of 1956–notably Blackhawk–to necessarily be Silver Age. Nor the last Captain America appearances of 1957...these and many other comics can arguably be assigned to the Atomic Age.

And by the way...I love that name!!! As one who remembers at least the latter part of that era, it's perfect. It conjures up the rabid anti-communism of books like T-Man and Blackhawk, the flag waving glory of the war books, the ever present "Atomic Bomb cover," the garish sensationalism of the EC heyday, the flying saucer paranoia of the SF books.... I'm increasingly becoming a collector of comics from this era, and as far as I am concerned, the Atomic Age is the perfect moniker for that "interregnum" between the great superhero periods.

Finally, it seems to me that a crucial element of the Silver Age was that it was a superhero renaissance–ultimately expanding, of course, into a huge variety of new characters–that was brought to life by established creatives in the business. I've never seen anybody else mention this point, and I think it's very important. There was a professionalism, line of continuity and carrying on of tradition that gave the new comics of the Silver Age their special appeal to both older fans and new fans. To me, the Silver Age pretty obviously ended when the profession finally became willing to allow new talent into its hallowed halls–chiefly from the ranks of the fandom it had helped spawn and nourish. This was an absolutely necessary step for the survival of the medium, it marked the outset of an era of incredible creativity and originality–but at the same time, it also marked the end of an era: the period we now know as the Silver Age.

All input, including that I'm totally all wet, is welcome. Regards,

Tony Gleeson, California

*You make a lot of excellent points, Tony... Whew... this question has so many factors to it that it is hard to discuss them all. I am of the opinion that Showcase #4 started it all and Detective #225 is of much lesser importance. But hey... ask my friend Keith Contarino and he'll tell you differently! Maybe some CBM readers can set us all straight! Thanks for your excellent letter, Tony!*

### Who will be left?

Anyone who thinks that ANY pre-1965 comic books are rare only had to stroll through the SD Con dealers room to be reminded that there are multiple copies of even the so called 'scarce books' (I saw 4 copies of Action #1, 3 copies of 'Tec 27, 6 copies of Red Raven #1, 8 copies of All American #16 etc.). The problem was they were all priced well beyond the reach of at least 90% of the collectors there. What does this say about the future of collecting?

If the overall pricing of older comics does not decrease and level off at an affordable rate who will be left to purchase *Continued on page 73*

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# Three Terrific Twos!

**By Pat S. Calhoun**

Back in the days before the direct market and "pre-orders," newsstand sales of comics were closely tracked, and for publishers, the first issues of a new title were often a risky business. Perhaps the second issue was the scariest, usually it was due out before reports came back on #1. And #2's couldn't even modestly assert that they were at least something brand new. Often publishers left the numbers off the covers of the first couple of issues. But despite their shaky status within the industry, sometimes those second issues would really define or even redefine a title.

In the first six months of 1952, Atlas (the company that became Marvel) started five classic fantasy/horror titles: *Adventures Into Weird Worlds* in January, *Mystery Tales* and *Spellbound* in March, and *Uncanny Tales* and *Journey Into Mystery* in June. The stories in each title were interchangeable, so outstanding issues are a "roll of the dice" determined by good stories, good art, and cool covers.

*Spellbound* #2 (April 1952) is a winner all the way, within a cover that compelled attention even in the colorful cornucopia of a 1952 newsstand. Who could resist this awesome Bill Everett art of a horror comics editor in his office with an array of weird mags on his wall and a monster arm snaking through his doorway?

The first story is a routine werewolf yarn, but the second tale is an inspired rewrite of Edgar Allen Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum."

Poe fans have argued for over a century about whether the story's ending could be improved upon. In this clever chiller the challenge is taken up by none other than the ghost of Poe! Russ Heath's art makes a good story better, with his detailed drawings and narrative grasp.

The third tale is a minor entertainment, a quiet prelude to the finale, "Horror Story." Lou Grant, editor of *Ghastly Stories*, has recently received several top-notch terror scripts from a mysterious "Mr. Morbid." When they send Morbid his first check it comes back postmarked "no such address." Grant, who has become obsessed by Morbid's skill at evoking the darker emotions in his creepy masterpieces, investigates and finds that the address is a crypt in the rural cemetery.

The confrontation between Mr. Morbid and the hapless horror editor is perfectly realized in all its grisly glory, and Everett's over-the-top art is marvelously effective.

The second issue of the American Comics Group's third supernatural title, *Out Of The Night* #2 (April/May 1952), stands out due to the presence of two of ACG's top artists, Al Williamson and George Carl Wilhelms. This ish also earns points with a nicely-staged mummy cover. The opener is a run-of-the-mill vampire yarn, featuring–as do so many ACG stories–a young couple struggling against supernatural forces.

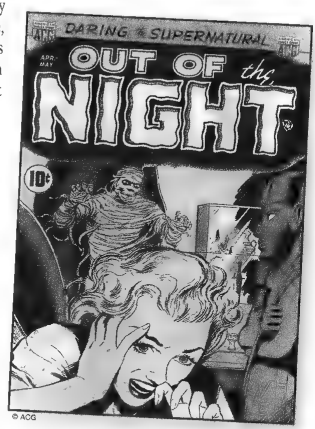
Up second is "Drum of Doom," superbly drawn by Al Williamson. A night club dancer and her manager buy a stolen voodoo drum in the mysterious Haitian hills. They take the drum back to New York to use in her act and discover that the drum's attendant zombies have followed its music when the gruesome creatures swarm into the club during a performance. This tale is a good read as well as a visual delight.

"The Heart of Horror" employs the ACG "magical menace attacks young couple whose only chance lies in enacting a bizarre counterspell" plot, and often these stories must be judged on how clever or contrived the counterspell is. Here, it's somewhat contrived but the story moves fast, has an intriguing premise, and–thanks to Wilhelms' work–is gorgeous to gaze upon. A young man in love has an imminently fatal heart disease and suggests a heart transplant to his doctor–a fantastic concept in 1952.

The doctor points out the difficulty of obtaining a fresh heart, but one night when the man knows death is near–a mysterious hooded woman knocks on his door at midnight with a heart in a box! Dumbfounded and disturbed but desperate, they proceed with the operation, and as the young man recovers they find that his soul has been possessed by an otherworldly fiend. Now it is up to the fiancée to save them both from the malevolent monster they have unwittingly revived... Resolving the suspense with an overly convenient counterspell makes the story less than great, but it's fun, and Wilhelms' art is wonderful.

"Scorpions From the Stars" closes the book, and it's a lightweight but highly amusing tale of an astrologer whose mumbo-jumbo prevents a murder. All in all, an ish that boded well for the title's future. *Out of the Night* #2 and *Spellbound* #2 were on the stands together; neither one said #2 on the cover.

The preceding books are both excellent #2s, but since both




**Even though mummies were a regular part of ACG's cast of stock supernatural characters, the ancient Egyptian horror cover on Out Of The Night #2 is not accompanied by a story inside.**

are fantasy titles and Atlas and ACG were already working the genre they didn't represent much of a risk. Vin Sullivan's Magazine Enterprises used some sophisticated techniques to allay the #2 blues. *Thun'da* #2, published in late 1952, did say "#2" on the cover, but the indicia listed it also as A-1 #56–part of ME's "umbrella" title. Vin published most new titles as quarterlies, to allow time for newsstand sales feedback. In addition, the absence of a cover date (which is actually a "pull" date) may have been a ploy to stay on the stands longer.

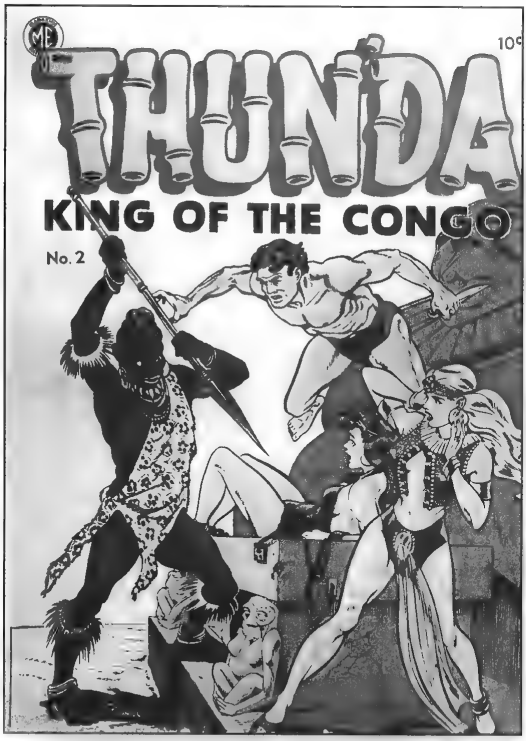
But the toughest problem that faced *Thun'da* #2 was filling the void Frank Frazetta left after creating the character and writing part of and drawing all of the unsurpassable first issue.

Bob Powell, who knew his way around the jungle genre, did a remarkable job of keeping the mythic atmosphere. The cover shows Powell's adeptness with action and anatomy and a quiet opulence that rewards lingering looks. Inside, "The White Goddess of Kotangu," starts with Thun'da on a trip to the coast where he rescues a woman who is the sole survivor of a shipwreck. He takes her back to his home in the Congo jungle, where his wife, Pha, can care for her. The two women become friends but are soon kidnapped by a tribe gone berserk, led by a crazed witch doctor who wants to sacrifice the women to his evil god. Thun'da is captured as well but breaks loose just as the terrifying ritual begins... Powell's art keeps things elevated, with a fast pace that includes a wealth of memorable and detailed images, culminating in the panel where Thun'da's saber-tooth tiger rips the face off one of the native kidnappers.

Two more Thun'da tales, "Diamond Death" and "Jungle Killers," both rate highly as well, with solid scripts that combine action and imagination. Powell's art is always interesting, and his animals are awesome.

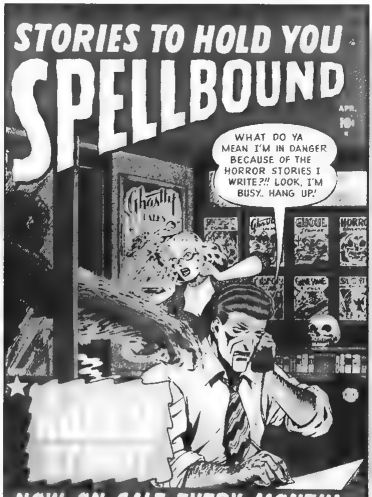
The last story introduces Cave Girl, who comes from the same prehistoric pocket in the jungle as Thun'da's tiger. This time the "bad guys" are a tribe of ape-men who capture the white trio and put a bound Thun'da into their arena and released three saber-tooth tigers on him.... It's the least of the four stories but still yields some satisfaction. *Thun'da* #2 is a worthy successor to Frazetta's monumental achievement.

These three examples of the wonderful world of second issues all hail from 1952, a year that saw the birth of many fine titles. Just three short years later, the shadow of the Comics Code would fall, and forever end the incredible diversity of horror and fantasy titles so synonymous with the early 1950s. ■




**Thun'da #2 (late 1952) features cover and story art by Bob Powell, who did an excellent job in keeping the larger-than-life mythic edge that Frank Frazetta established in the first issue.**

*Pat has been collecting comic books since the early 1960s, and is a nationally recognized comic book historian.*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**As great as Bill Everett's cover is, his inside art on "Horror Story" (Spellbound #2, Apr 1952) surpasses it pulsating with manic glee and a narrative force that literally propels the reader from panel to panel.**

# The Bad, the Strange, and the Sleazy!

## Jungle queens and sexy teens made Fox Comics one of the most controversial and collectible comic companies of the 1940s!

**By Michelle Nolan**

**MY INTIMATE AFFAIR #1 (Mar 1950) takes the cake for suggestive covers, presented from an intriguing angle, complete with a smirk on the man's face.**

When the subject of sleaze in comics comes up, the Fox Comics line goes down as the worst of the worst. But what makes Fox equally interesting is its strange publishing history. There has never been another company like it.

Thank heavens, some would say, since the vast majority of comics from Fox Features Syndicate (as the company was known on its logo) were cheap in every way. For every issue of *Phantom Lady*, there were literally more than 50 of the poorest comics ever published, esthetically speaking that is.

It's mind-boggling to place most of the Fox comics of 1950 next to the slick productions from Dell, Quality or DC. The comparison is jarring.

Jules Feiffer, in his ground-breaking book of the mid-1960s, *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, was the first to point this out; he was right on the money in his memories of Fox. Feiffer dubbed Fox the Monogram Studios of the comic book world, although most of us had a hard time understanding the comparison at the time (except for a few wonderful westerns, most of Monogram's movies of the 1940s are virtually unwatchable today).

As kitsch, though, Fox comics are irresistible, in part because no company came under greater or more consistent attack from Dr. Fredric Wertham in his now-infamous book *Seduction of the Innocent*. It's typical of Dr. Wertham's scattershot screed, however, that Fox had been long gone from the newsstands by the time his book was published in 1954. Indeed, most of the offending comics cited in his book were long gone by 1954.

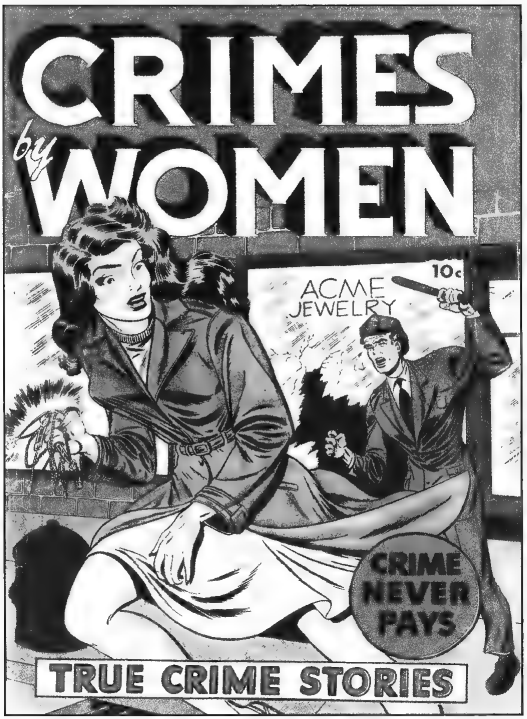
Lots of collectors have commented on the Fox "sleaze factor" or on the highly collectible Phantom Lady appearances by the inimitable Matt Baker. But what most intrigues me is the general path this company took to publishing comics. Victor Fox was, to say the least, an unorthodox publisher.

By now just about everyone knows how Fox, after working in the business office during the late 1930s for National Periodical Publications (which evolved into DC Comics), set up his own publishing company in 1939 and farmed out his earliest jobs to the ambitious Eisner-Iger shop. Fox was the first comic book publisher to copy Superman, with the lone appearance of Wonderman in *Wonder Comics* #1 (May 1939), and the first publisher to be ordered to cease and desist.

It would be a dozen years, however, before the other publishers finally got Fox out of the comic book hen house. Before his

career as a publisher ended twelve years later, he wound up being one of the most reviled men in comics (according to many of the accounts of people who worked for him)... just part of his odd publishing legacy.

Despite the fiasco with Wonder Man, Fox soon established his own studio and apparently prospered until the outbreak of the United States' involvement in World War II, when he closed up shop for nearly three years after farming out his most successful title, *Blue Beetle,* to Holyoke.




**CRIMES BY WOMEN #13 (Jun 1950) is one of the sleaziest of all Fox comics, right down to the title.**

In fact, during the years 1940 and 1941, only DC and Dell published more comics books than the 138 quasi-gems produced by Victor Fox. That's a historical concept comic historians never address and one that most collectors are unaware of.

All of Fox's early comics were superhero titles (unless you don't count the one-shot *Rex Dexter of Mars*, which was done in the same superhero tradition as the rest). In all, Fox produced 165 comics over nearly three years before the last issue of his original fling, which was *V... - Comics* #2 (March 1942). That two-issue series had one of the strangest titles in the history of comics, with the "...-" being Morse Code (dot dot dot dash)!

Even these early superhero comics were usually primitive on the inside, although they did burst with an almost kinetic version of frenzied action. But it's their beautiful covers, many by Lou Fine, that make them among the most highly sought-after Golden Age collectibles. But Lou Fine's role in the Fox publishing history has been covered in previous *CBM*'s, so we'll move on.

Let's fast forward to 1944, when Fox returned to comic book publishing, again with nothing but superheroes as his lead features. Fox resumed control of *Blue Beetle Comics* with issue #31 cover dated June 1944, (after Holyoke published issues 12-30); *Green Mask Comics* with issue #10 (August 1944); and *Rocket Kelly,* which was basically just another superhero comic although it's usually listed as a sci-fi title.

Fox also published a strange and preposterous five-issue title called *The Bouncer*, featuring a superhero inspired by Greek mythology. He also published five obscure one-shot squarebound giants in 1944... *All Good, All Great, All Your Comics, Book of Comics* and *Everybody's Comics*... all with superheroes on the covers.

Thus, Fox was among the first to publish squarebound giants and one of the first to popularize the squarebound trend with at least 33 of them from 1948-50. He published 46 in all, some in connection with the William M. Wise Company. I'm not sure what percentage of the 1944-47 giants carried reprints or unused house inventory strips, but the 33 from 1948-50 were all rebound comics, consisting of four unsold Fox books, to the best of my knowledge. Since many Fox comics of the period began their stories on the inside front cover (just one of the many unusual quirks of this company) almost all of these rebound giants contain several incomplete stories!

I know of no other publisher who was so utterly careless and/or immune to reader's wrath. But then, Fox was like no other publisher.

At any rate, Fox remained a minor publisher in 1944 and 1945, producing only 36 comics in those two years combined. But he (or his editors) obviously saw the end of the first superhero cycle approaching and Fox virtually abandoned the genre for good after 1946. His remaining costume heroes, Blue Beetle and Phantom Lady, emerged as leading characters in what were basically crime comics.

In 1945, Fox for the first time explored another genre–funny animals. His first anthropomorphic antics were published in *Jo-Jo Comics* #1 (not yet a jungle comic), *Krazylife* #1 and *Ribtickler* #1, along with a square bound version of *Ribtickler*. All of these comics were undated, perhaps in the hope that they would have a longer shelf life. Other collectors may disagree, but I find these books more bizarre than charming, especially when compared to the wonderful funny animal work emerging from Dell and DC during the same period.

**ONLY FOX could take the Sherlock Holmes character, who is in one story in Spectacular Stories Magazine #4 (Jul 1950), and turn out a cover like this. Not so elementary, Dr. Watson!**

At any rate, Fox apparently became convinced that funny animals were the way to go. He published a few issues of *Blue Beetle, Green Mask* and *Rocket Kelly* in 1946, but the rest of his line was almost entirely devoted to funny animals and a few other humor strips. *Ribtickler* and *Jo-Jo* continued sporadically along with *Wotalife Comics*, which was the first Fox comic to significantly change its title after beginning as *Krazylife* #1 and *Nutty Life* #2.

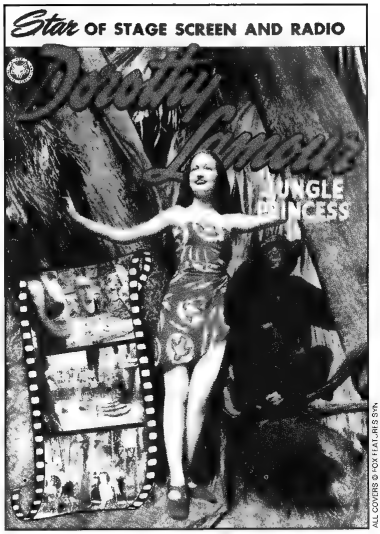
Other publishers already had claimed "Krazy" and "Nutty" in their titles, so one can imagine the harassed Fox throwing up his arms and muttering "wotalife!" with regard to coming up with comic book titles no one else had already monopolized!

Fox also began *Zoot Comics* in 1946 as a funny animal title. I've never been able to figure out why "Zoot" was chosen for this genre; it would seem to have made a lot more sense as a banner for a teen humor book. Just another Fox quirk.

Fox remained a minor publisher in 1946 with only 38 issues produced and in 1947 with only 55. But some of those 55 were destined to mark a turning point in comic book history, when Fox abruptly decided to abandon the funny animal market. Once again, he had quit a genre entirely, never to return with one minor exception in 1950. Since anthropomorphic humor was doing very well with other publishers, Fox's second-rate handling of this theme apparently didn't sell, which was no surprise.

So by the Summer of 1947 Fox had converted *Jo-Jo, All-Top* and *Zoot* to what would become infamous jungle titles. Meanwhile, *Lil' Pan* and *Cosmo Cat* (by far his best funny animal titles) became the short-lived but outrageously suggestive teen humor titles *Junior* and *Sunny*. And *Wotalife*, ironically, became the never-to-be-forgotten *Phantom Lady* by Matt Baker (Wotanartist!). Comic books would never be the same, and this relatively minor publisher would be responsible for a major share of the criticism of "children's comics."

For a while, at least, these suggestive new titles did well, although one can only imagine the damage Fox did to the reputation of comic books in general. Can you imagine late 1940's grammar school teachers taking one look at *Phantom Lady, Rulah,* and *Sunny* and cringing? Not to mention




**TYPICAL OF THE ECLECTIC MIX**
**Fox produced as it desperately tried to stay in business, Dorothy Lamour Jungle Princess #3 (Aug 1950) is highly sought after.**

CBM CHECKLIST

## MYTHICAL FOX COMICS?

The Overstreet Price Guide lists the following Fox comics, supposedly from late 1950 and early 1951, when the publisher apparently was on hiatus. None of them is pictured in Gerber. Can anyone come up with proof that any of these exist?

- Cody Of The Pony Express #2 (Nov 1950) and #3 (Jan 1951)
- Features Stories Magazine #4 (Oct 1950)
- Jungle Jo #4 (Nov 1950), #5 (Jan 1951) and #6 (Mar 1951)

The following comics apparently do not exist. We're still looking for any proof that they do:

- All Top #6 (the copy pictured in Photo-Journal is a reprint; there were two #7s)
- Blue Beetle #43
- Full Color Comics (1946 one-shot)
- Romeo Tubbs #1 (the listed #1 probably does not exist; #26 dated May 1950 and #28 dated Jul 1950 do exist, as does the #2 dated Sep 1950)
- They Ring The Bell (1946; does this exist as a giveaway or at all?)
- Western Killers nn (this may be part of a confusing series of Fox reprints in 1954 from M.S. Distributors, whoever they were)

The following Fox listings definitely do not exist:

- Range Busters #2-8 (#1 exists as a Sep 1950 Fox and #8 exists as 1955 Charlton, leading to the confusion)
- Love Stories #6-12 (they were confused with Star's Top Love Stories, some of which contain Fox reprints or inventory material)

## FOX TITLE PROGRESSIONS

Collectors spent many years figuring out the convoluted Fox system for changing titles. Here are a few of the more complicated listings:

- From Blue Beetle #1-57 to Western Killers #60-64 to *(Continued on page 16)*

*Murder Inc.*, *Crimes By Women* and *Women Outlaws*, all of which shot onto the sleazy Fox stage in 1948.

This sleaze (albeit well-done sleaze in a few cases) enabled Fox to develop into a solid second-tier publisher in 1948. He produced 96 comic books (thanks to Southern California index king Dan Stevenson for help with the statistics for this article), which was right up there with Standard's 98 and Quality's 100. Only DC (224), Marvel (212), Dell (192) and Fawcett (160) were clearly ahead of Fox in the comic book stakes.

Those 96 comics were entirely devoted to various forms of violence and salaciousness, with modern crime and western crime added to the jungle themes and sexy teens, along with the first two issues of his initial foray into romance–the genre that two years later would bring Fox to his knees (pun intended but not apologized for). *My Life* #4 (September 1948)–continued from the teen humor title *Meet Corliss Archer*–ties with the first Marvel romance title, *My Romance*, as the second "true romance" title behind Crestwood's *Young Romance* (I contend that Hillman's 1947 *My Date* is in the teen humor genre).

Fox seems to have made a fatal mistake in 1949, however, when by Summertime of that year he converted every one of his titles into romance comics except for *Famous Crimes*, *Murder Inc.* and *Crimes By Women*. Even *Murder Inc.* failed to make it into early 1950, becoming *My Private Life* in one of the more ironic title switches in comic book history. (Murder Inc. did shortly reappear, in the final stages of Fox's publishing career.)

Talk about putting all your eggs into one basket! By 1950, for a few months Fox published 21 romance titles at once! (plus a few rebound giants). The art on these is generally abysmal, and the stories are the ultimate in sleaze, but some collectors find them irresistible because they're so outrageous! These were the first of the "bad girls" in comics, albeit in night-gowns and slinky gowns instead of spandex.

As has been detailed before in a previous "Notebook," Fox became one of the most luckless victims of the "Love Glut" of nearly 150 titles in the first half of 1950. And, like most romance publishers, Fox sharply curtailed his romance line, but it was too late. Romance had given him the economic kiss of death, and even the amazingly varied menu he presented in his final offering of regularly published comics (all dated August and September 1950) did not succeed (see chart on the mythical Fox comics of late 1950-early 1951).

It is fascinating, however, to study the desperation with which Fox attacked the market in the Summer of 1950. Once again, there were Fox jungle comics, western comics, crime comics, teen humor comics, and even a superhero title (*Blue Beetle* #58-60)–a genre that had become scarce on the newsstands by 1950. There were also a series of movie adaptations,

*(Continued)*
Western Killers #6 to My True Love #65 (published the same month as Western Killers #6) through #69 to Frank Buck #70-71 to Frank Buck #3
- From Krazylife #1 to
- Nuttylife #2 to Wotalife #3-12 to Phantom Lady #13-23 to My Love Secret #24-30 and to Animal Crackers #31
- Rocket Kelly nn to Rocket Kelly #1-5 to Lil' Pan #6-8 to Junior #9-16 to Western Outlaws #17-21 to My Secret Life #22-27 to Romeo Tubbs #28
- All Great #14 (formerly Phantom Lady #1-13?) to All-Great #13 to Dagar #14-23 (with no #17-18) to Captain Kidd #24-25 to My Secret Story #26-29 to Sabu #30 to Sabu #2
- Western Thrillers #1-6 to My Past Confessions #7-11 to Crimes Inc. #12 to Crimes Inc. #2
- Western True Crime #15-16 (from Bouncer #14?) to Western True Crime #3-6 to My Confessions #7-10 to Spectacular Feature Magazine #11 to Spectacular Features #12 to Spec. Features #3
- Zoot #1-6 to Rulah #17-27 to I Loved #28-32 to Colossal Features Magazine #33-34 to Colossal Features #3

## Fox's Struggle to Survive

This is the eclectic mix of publications Fox produced for its last regularly published comics, all dated either August or September 1950:
- Blue Beetle #58
- Cody of the Pony Express #1
- Colossal Features Magazine #3
- Crime Inc. #2
- Crimes by Women #14
- Dorothy Lamour #3
- Famous Crimes #19
- Feature Stories Mag. #3
- Frank Buck #3
- Hoot Gibson Western #3
- Hunted #2
- Inside Crime #2
- Judy Canova #3
- Jungle Jo #3
- Life w/ Snarky Parker #1
- March of Crime #2
- Martin Kane #2
- Murder Inc. #2
- My Love Life #13
- My Story #12
- Pedro #2
- Range Busters #1
- Romeo Tubbs #2
- Sabu #2
- Spectacular Features Magazine #3
- Spectacular Stories Magazine #3
- Will Rogers Western #2

## Fox's Last Gasp

During the summer of 1951, eight Fox comics mysteriously appeared as "one-shot" publications (although all but one were continued from previous titles). They are dated August or September 1951:
- Crime Inc. #3
- Crimes By Women #15
- Famous Crimes #20
- General Douglas MacArthur (no date)
- March of Crime #3
- Murder Inc. #3
- My Love Life #13
- Rocket Ship X #1

literary adaptations and historical adaptations with confusing titles like *Feature Stories Magazine, A Star Presentation, Colossal Features Magazine,* and the like.

Check out the accompanying chart of the Fox comics dated August and September 1950, and you'll see a company desperately trying anything and everything! It's certainly among the most eclectic group of comics ever to come from one publisher at the same time. Fox was so desperate for a western hero that it published *Hoot Gibson*, whose movie career basically ended during World War II when he was in his 50s, and *Will Rogers,* who was a homespun syndicated newspaper humorist who died in 1935! Well, I guess Will Rogers sounds like a western hero!

One contributor to this publisher's terminal difficulties in 1950 was that the US post office finally caught up with him and forced him to change the numbering on his comics when the title and genre changed, as per postal regulations (unlike most of his earlier title and genre changes). He got away with changing *Wotalife* to *Phantom Lady* and so forth in the 1947-49 period, but in 1950, it didn't work. (It's also probably the reason he continued the titles on some of his 1947 humor comics even though the genre changed.)

Thus, in 1950 the likes of *My Experience* #22 became *Judy Canova* #23-24 before becoming *Judy Canova* #3 and *My Secret Story* #29 became *Sabu* #30 before turning into *Sabu* #2. This happened to all of the 18 romance titles Fox converted, causing collectors no end of want list headaches for many, many years.

There is delicious irony for collectors, though, in several of the title changes. I loved it when I discovered that *My Love Affair* #6 became *March Of Crime* #7, and when *My Desire* #4 became *Murder Inc.* #5. But the funniest changes were when *My Intimate Affair* #2 became *Inside Crime* #3 and when *My Past Confessions* #11 became *Crimes Inc.* #12. All's fair in love and crime!

Fox published 135 comics in 1949 and 128 in 1950 before Fox seemed to have vanished forever. Interestingly, however, seven Fox comics appeared on the stands dated either August 1951 or September 1951. They were *Crime Incorporated* #3, *Crimes By Women* #15, *Famous Crimes* #20, *March Of Crime* #3, *Murder Inc.* #3, *Rocket Ship X* #1, and *My Love Life* #13 (not to be confused with the *My Love Life* #13 from 1950. The 1951 issue probably was continued from *My Story* #12). In addition, an undated 1951 issue entitled *General Douglas MacArthur* also appeared in 1951, perhaps about the same time, to take advantage of the general's Korean War notoriety.

After those mysterious eight Summer 1951 issues, Fox Features Syndicate vanished forever from the comic book scene, leaving an incredible legacy of strange and sleazy comics for us to collect. ■

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*Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.*


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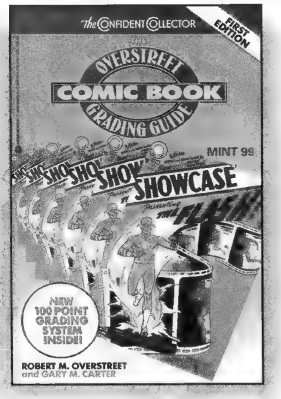


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LIBERTY TRAIN! THE WIZARD
LIBER

Black Canary became a full-fledged Justice Society member at the end of "The Case of the Patriotic Crimes," in **All Star** #41 (Jun/Jul 1948).

# No Gurls Allowed!

## Was the legendary Justice Society really just a Boys' Club?

You wanted to scream at them, admit it. If, like me, you were around to read about The Justice Society of America a half century ago, you'd sit there with the latest issue of *All Star Comics* in your hands, mouth agape, as the JSA set out on its latest adventure. Off they would scramble, filled with determination, six or more heroes out to foil yet another dastardly plot. And there she'd be, beautiful as Aphrodite, Wise as Athena, strong as Hercules… and sedate as a secretary, which was the role to which she'd been relegated.

An Amazon Princess, for heaven's sake, was filing papers and dusting the furniture while the fate of the world hung in the balance. She was smarter, stronger and (for a while there, while Flash was sidelined due to the publisher's weird rules about "honorary" membership) faster than any of the other members (the ones who were actually alive, anyway, the Spectre's vast powers were an issue they never did resolve in those pages), yet she was always left behind.

"Hey, guys," you wanted to yell at Chairman Hawkman and his pals, "what are you thinking about? This is Wonder Woman, not just some silly regular girl."

Okay, so it was a less enlightened time. You get the point. "No gurls allowed" read the signs on all those clubhouses in the pages of Little Lulu and you couldn't help but feel there was one on the door to the JSA meeting room as well.

Well, I've gone back and looked and it turns out that wasn't exactly the case. Oh, rampant male chauvinism did reign for a while during the glory days when each member popped off into a five or six page adventure of his own as part of each book-length adventure (*All Star* #3-38, 1940-1948), but female superheroes fared better than it seemed when the whole record is laid out. In fact, they often saved the day after "the boys" (as Wonder Woman would often refer to the rest of the membership, and we can only speculate about her tone of voice) had managed to screw things up.

## Enter Wonder Woman

Let's look at the record, beginning with the fact that Wonder Woman's first appearance ever was in the eight-page origin story which ran in the back of *All Star* #8, (December 1941/January 1942), the work of creators William Marston and Harry Peter. That issue, by

BY JACK CURTIN

the way, is arguably the ultimate JSA comic. It featured not only the WW origin, but also the induction of Starman and Dr. Mid-Nite into the JSA and a Hop Harrigan one-page text story in which the entire team guest starred, including honorary members Superman and Batman (who had appeared only once, a brief three panel cameo, in the previous issue and would not return until their only full-length JSA stint, "The Five Drowned Men," in *All Star* #36).

The Amazon Princess returned in *All Star* #11 (June/July 1942), albeit not yet as a member of the JSA. She was, as the opening splash page put it, "a guest star in a national emergency." The was the first story done after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and all the JSAers were rushing to join the military in their civilian identities (except again for The Spectre, as ghosts were exempt from the draft). His absence provided space for a Wonder Woman solo adventure.

Introducing
Wonder Woman
AT LAST, IN A WORLD TORN BY THE HATREDS AND WARS OF MEN, APPEARS A WOMAN TO WHOM THE PROBLEMS AND FEATS OF MEN ARE MERE CHILD'S PLAY— A WOMAN WHOSE IDENTITY IS KNOWN TO NONE, BUT WHOSE SENSATIONAL FEATS ARE OUTSTANDING IN A FAST-MOVING WORLD, WITH A HUNDRED TIMES THE AGILITY AND STRENGTH OF OUR BEST MALE athletes AND STRONGEST WRESTLERS, SHE APPEARS AS THOUGH FROM NOWHERE TO AVENGE AN INJUSTICE OR RIGHT A WRONG / AS LOVELY AS APHRODITE— AS WISE AS ATHENA — WITH THE SPEED OF MERCURY AND THE STRENGTH OF HERCULES — SHE IS KNOWN ONLY AS WONDER WOMAN, BUT WHO SHE IS, OR WHENCE SHE CAME, NOBODY KNOWS /
by
CHARLES MOULTON

All STAR COMICS
52 BIG PAGES
The JUSTICE SOCIETY of AMERICA'S CRIME-CHASE 'ROUND THE WORLD—
The MYSTERY OF THE VANISHING DETECTIVES!

**Wonder Woman, along with Green Lantern and Hawkman, became one of the most prominently featured JSA members on All Star covers during the final two years of the title's run, including the final Golden Age issue, All Star #57 (Feb/Mar 1951).**

**The origin of Wonder Woman in All Star #8 (Dec 1941/Jan 1942, SPLASH PAGE SHOWN ABOVE) was a major Golden Age event that went unnoticed on both the cover and in JSA story in that issue.**

The WW chapter began as a one-page addendum to Hawkman's chapter and was set on a troop ship when Nurse Diana Prince met compatriot Shiera (Hawkgirl) Sanders. We should certainly note, in the context of all this, that Hawkgirl's own origin in the Hawkman chapter in *All Star* #5 (June/July 1941), marked the first super-heroine appearance ever in a JSA story and perhaps the first anywhere. Anyway, Hawkman joined the two women, everybody rather casually exchanged secret identities and then WW went off to wreak havoc among Japanese invaders in the Philippines.

Having superheroes as part of the war effort proved to be more of a problem than a solution as the military commanders squabbled about whose JSAer was best. The resolution at the end of the story was to commission the All Stars as a special homefront unit, The Justice Battalion of America, rather than have them fight as enlistees. Always the gentleman, Dr. Fate suggested "And I think Wonder Woman ought to be a member too." Nobody objected. In fact, most of them acted as if she wasn't even there.

The cover of *All Star* #12 (August/September 1942) seemed to suggest that Wonder Woman was going to be a pretty important part of things thereafter (she was the featured character in a "V for Victory" pose by the JSA), but the inside pages were a precursor to an entirely different fate. She was not listed as a member on the splash page and Hawkman informed the others that she had "volunteered to be our secretary while we are at war." "The boys" then sped off to battle The Black Hand Society, a secret Japanese sect of spies and assassins. Watching them go, writer Gardner F. Fox (who wrote every issue up to #34) informed us, "a wistful look enters the lovely eyes of Wonder Woman."

A bit of explanation is important to clarify what happened next. The way JSA membership worked in those days was that a hero was voted in by the readers based upon his popularity in one of the anthology titles published by either Detective Comics (DC) or All-American Comics (AA), two inter-related publishers. If he became popular enough to warrant his own title, he moved to "honorary" membership and ceased active participation in JSA adventures. Superman and Batman were thus relegated to the sidelines right from the start, and Flash and Green Lantern joined the inactive ranks early on. Presumably because the powers that be wanted to keep their only female superstar on stage, even if only minimally, those rules were slightly bent for Wonder Woman.

The Amazon Princess became a member, honorary member and permanent secretary of the JSA in one neat package at the close of *All Star* #13 (October/November 1942), the latter assignment allowing her to remain in the book but not have a chapter of her own. She did manage one last fling in that issue when she and her fellow members were "Shanghaied into Space" by evil Nazi scientists. Each was sent to a different planet. The Amazon ended up on (where else?) Venus, in a chapter again done by her own creative team. There she met up with a Venusian race consisting of women with wings and men who were, well, pretty much wimps. Desira, Queen of the planet, explained that "Our men love us dearly. They obey us. Because if they did not, we would fly away from them." Replied our heroine, thoughtfully, possibly with "the boys" in mind, "That's a wonderful way to keep men in their place."

Speaking of places, Wonder Woman had learned hers by the next issue. When the team set out on a new adventure, she complacently told Hawkman, "Unfortunately, as secretary and honorary member, I have to remain behind." In *All Star* #15 (February/March 1943), though, she showed that there was still a bit of life left in the old girl. "The Man Who Created Images" introduced the JSA's arch foe, Brain Wave, and Wonder Woman

recruited the member's girlfriends (who inexplicably all knew the heroes' secret identities in *All Star* but not in their own series), gave each a costume duplicating that of her hero and suggested they all go capture the villain "and show up Hawkman and the boys." This rampant bit of feminism was squelched when the female impersonators (in the most accurate sense of the words) were themselves captured and held hostage by Brain Wave in a final standoff with the rest of the JSA.

It was the last hurrah for a while… a long while. For the next 23 issues, from the Spring of 1943 until the end of 1947, Wonder Woman became the bittiest of bit players in the JSA saga, turning up only in the framing segments at beginning and end of each issue and not always even that: she appeared not at all in *All Star* #23 (Winter 1944) and in only one panel in *All Star* #28 (April/May 1946).

THANKS! AND I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU HOW PROUD I AM TO BE AT LAST A MEMBER OF AN ORGANI-ZATION LIKE OURS THAT WILL ALWAYS FIGHT TO THE DEATH TO PRESERVE OUR AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS AND OUR AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE!

## Enter Black Canary

Wonder Woman's return to active duty and the re-emergence of the female superhero in the JSA came in *All Star* #38 (December 1947/January 1948), a classic issue which marked both the last time the JSAers would appear in individual chapters and the debut of the character who would become the final new member of the team. That new member was Black Canary, the mysterious beauty with no super powers of her own who, it might be argued, became the most important figure in the book over the course of this and the subsequent three issues. Maybe blondes, even bewigged ones, really do have more fun.

In *All Star* #38, "History's Crime Wave," (scripted by DC legend Robert Kanigher), Black Canary saved the JSA not once, but twice. In the opening pages of the story, all six male members were killed by a madman who impersonated great historical villains (Attila, Genghis Khan, Cesare Borgia). Finding Johnny Thunder's dead body, a weeping Canary rushed to the JSA's secret headquarters to tell Wonder Woman what had happened. Well-rested after three and a half years of taking shorthand, the Amazon quickly gathered up the fallen heroes and flew their bodies off to Paradise Island where Paula's Purple Healing Ray (a marvelous Deus ex Machina from her regular series) restored them to life.

Befuddled and confused (coming back from the dead wasn't quite the comics rage in those days that it is today), the JSAers then used a plan devised by Black Canary to lure the villain out of hiding-and promptly fell victim to him again, one by one. This bad guy was not some super criminal, by the way, just a wax museum security guard with a little problem. "The boys" were apparently having one of those days. In any case, they awakened in the basement of said museum to find hot molten wax pouring down on them and their captor sneering and laughing at them. Black Canary, impersonating Lucrezia Borgia, saved the day, albeit clumsily (she tripped on her long skirt and the madman fell over her to his death into the hot wax below).

The battle won, Black Canary wandered off with bowed head, muttering, "Well, I guess I'll run along. I know you Justice Society of America members have important things-to do-wouldn't want me around-Good-bye!" Yeah, right. At the next JSA meeting, one panel later, a suddenly assertive Wonder Woman, acting as chairperson, presented a beaming Black Canary: "We have an honorary guest-and some day-we hope to have her as a regular member of the Justice Society!"

You have to wonder if poor Johnny Thunder

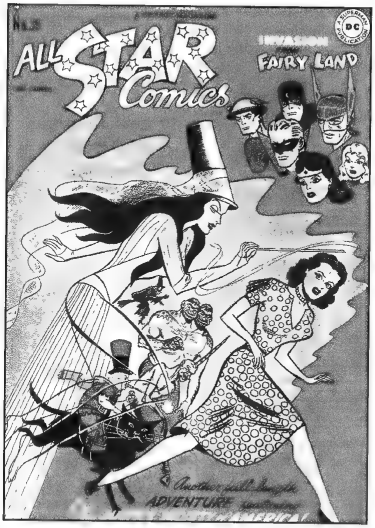
**Black Canary's speech at the end of the story in which she becomes a full fledged member of the JSA (All Star #41, Jun/Jul 1948).**

**Wonder Woman gathers up the bodies of her fellow members in All Star #38 (Dec 1947/Jan 1948) so that she can fly them to Paradise Island and bring them back to life.**

All-Star Comics
WONDER WOMAN REVIVES THE BLACK CANARY, SHE HEARS AN AMAZING STORY!
JOHNNY THUNDER KNEW HE...WAS DYING... THAT'S THE ONLY REASON...WHY HE SENT ME TO YOU...ATTILA THOUGHT... HE KILLED ME TOO... BUT I ESCAPED...
SPURRED TO ACTION, WONDER WOMAN LEAVES THE BLACK CANARY RESTING, AND...
RACING SWIFTLY AGAINST TIME, WHICH HAS ALREADY STOPPED BEATING FOR HER FELLOW MEMBERS, WONDER WOMAN COLLECTS THEIR REMAINS...
...AND RETURNS WITH THE LAST ONE!

had a premonition when he heard those words. He certainly should have. Black Canary first appeared in his strip in *Flash Comics* #86 (August 1947), now here she was bringing brains and beauty to the JSA. In *Flash Comics* #92 (February 1948), he lost his story slot to the new heroine and he then made his final Golden Age appearance in *All Star* #39 (February/March 1948), which featured the classic "Invasion from Fairyland," written by John Broome, who scripted the JSA for the rest of their run. Perhaps as preparation for losing everything else, Johnny lost his head for a while (the first sans individual chapters), when he, Hawkman and Green Lantern were locked in a dungeon and their heads were magically switched onto one another's body. Black Canary got involved in the story when she followed an escaped convict into Fairyland. She immediately saved Wonder Woman and Dr. Mid-Nite from three wild dogs and then acted as part of the team for the rest of the way. Plus, she appeared on the cover, in a mug shot with the rest of the JSA, in place of the departing Johnny. (Whew!)

**All Star #39 (Feb/Mar 1948), Black Canary's first cover appearance.**



Black Canary guest starred yet again in *All Star* #40 (April/May 1948), "The Plight of a Nation," helping the JSA tackle the problem of juvenile delinquency. No mention was made of her status (she was on the cover again though), although she sat in with the other members in place of the gone, and apparently forgotten, Johnny Thunder. She then finally won official membership in *All Star* #41 (June/July 1948) when she once more, with a little help from a surprising source, rescued the JSA from certain doom. Again, she had to do it twice.

**In All Star #40 (Apr/May 1948) Black Canary is on the cover but not yet a member.**

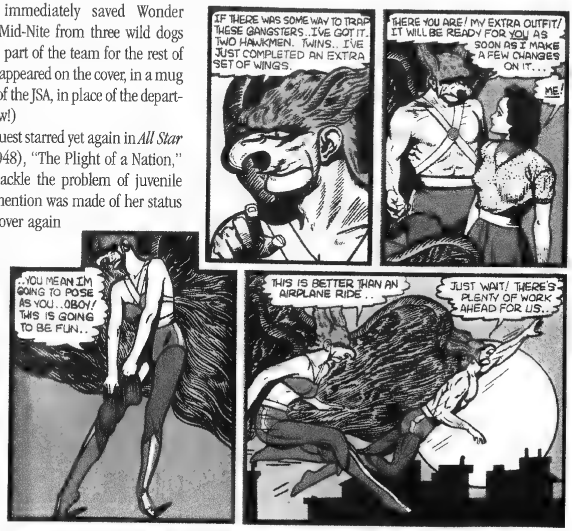
**Shiera Sanders becomes Hawkgirl in All Star #5 (Jun/Jul 1941).**

## Enter The Harlequin

"The Case of the Patriotic Crimes" introduced a new version of the Injustice Society of the World, arch foes brought together by the Wizard. They'd already stolen many of America's classic historical monuments and mind-erased the entire JSA into being their servants when the story opened. Black Canary arrived at JSA headquarters to find it empty except for a groggy Harlequin, the long time Green Lantern foe (with maybe the silliest costume in all of comics), hidden under the table.

Long in love with her Emerald opponent, Harlequin had accepted an invite to join the new Injustice Society in order to betray them to the JSA. Unfortunately, her plan led instead to the capture of the heroes. After Canary and Harlequin were themselves captured, they hypnotized the heroes back to their true selves. Battles ensued, as always. After all this, however, the heroes were back in the thrall of the Wizard and companions. With things looking decidedly gloomy, Black Canary managed to convince a blank eyed Green Lantern that he could use his power ring to fly, an accomplishment which shocked him (and his watching fellow members) back to their senses. She was granted full membership (at last) at story's end.

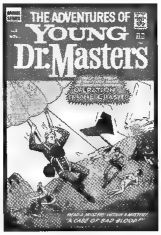
Wonder Woman and Black Canary were fully integrated into the JSA for the remaining 16 issues of *All Star Comics*. But the team-up concept, forced by a dwindling number of story pages, meant that all the heroes became relatively bland, interchangeable icons with no real individual personalities. The two heroines carved out some pretty impressive moments over the years and proved that women had a vital role to play in the JSA, but each became, in the end, just one of the boys. ■


IF THERE WAS SOME WAY TO TRAP THESE GANGSTERS..I'VE GOT IT. TWO HAWKMEN. TWINS.. I'VE JUST COMPLETED AN EXTRA SET OF WINGS.
THERE YOU ARE! MY EXTRA OUTFIT! IT WILL BE READY FOR YOU AS SOON AS I MAKE A FEW CHANGES ON IT...
ME!
..YOU MEAN I'M GOING TO POSE AS YOU...OBOY! THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN..
THIS IS BETTER THAN AN AIRPLANE RIDE..
JUST WAIT! THERE'S PLENTY OF WORK AHEAD FOR US..

# ESOTERIC ARCHIE!

**A LOOK AT LESSER-KNOWN ARCHIE TITLES**

During the Golden and Silver Ages of comic books, publishers were constantly striving to outdo one another and garner as much of the market for themselves as possible. One way they did so was by having a diversified group of titles. This truly was the heyday of comics fun and excitement for voracious readers, as it resulted in the widest array of subjects ever available in comic form. This included not only the reigning costumed heroes, but funny animals, horror, science fiction, mystery, movie-related comics, adaptations of classic literature, romance, westerns, good girl comics and of course, teenage humor comics.




*By Paul Castiglia*

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# The Magic Logbook!

## Tracing The Steps of Joe Simon and Jerry Siegel at Archie Comics

I can't remember what day it was, what the weather was like or even exactly where I found it at this point. All I could say then—and now—is "WOW!" It's a log book. A big, black ledger book with white pages bisected by blue and red lines so you can separate information. Just like the log books we use today at Archie Comics.

It tells the-story-of-a-story. By that, I mean, they show a story's progress every step of the way: when the writer's script was received and/or approved; when it went out to which penciler; when it went out to which inker; and in some cases what letterer. The difference with this log book were the dates: I had stumbled across the log book for the years 1958 through 1966! As I thumbed through it, two names in particular jumped out at me, Captain America co-creator Joe Simon, and Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel! Some comics aficionados already know that these comics pioneers did work for Archie Comics during the Silver Age, but here in my hands was the actual record of the work they did and when they did it! Needless to say, It was quite a thrill to look through this book!

It has also been an interesting learning experience. For example, in the Simon entries, the log book makes no mention of Jack Kirby. In fact, it only ever mentions the letterers of those stories. Some of the stories—such as the early Fly and Private Strong stories—are generally accepted as Simon and Kirby collaborations. My guess is that Simon delivered the stories complete to the Archie offices from the studios he shared with Kirby, and when it came time to sign the material in and out, the person keeping the log just signed Simon down the line as he was the person responsible for physically handing in the stories—even though Kirby's presence is clearly felt in those pages!

Also, there is no mention in this log book of the stories that Simon & Kirby did for the first issue of *The Double Life Of Private Strong*. It is possible that they completed work on those stories in 1957, or perhaps there is another reason they don't show up in the log book—we'll probably never know!

Also of interest in the log book is the large number of entries for writer Jerry Siegel. At the time, since the stories rarely if ever had credit boxes or signatures, comic readers had no idea that many of Archie's superhero's adventures were being chronicled by the man who created the penultimate superhero! In this regard, the log book represents another chance at documenting comic book history—filling in the blanks where lack of credits or fuzzy memories could not.

**DISCLAIMER:** As the log books were maintained by human beings, there may be some human error. The following represents what is in the log book and does not necessarily mean the information is 100% accurate—some of it may be wrong or incomplete. There is also the possibility that story titles were changed right before going to press, which would not be reflected in the log books. Without further ado, then, here is a checklist of the Simon and Siegel entries that appear in the log book:

**JOE SIMON CREDITS AS THEY APPEAR IN LOGBOOK** (MAY BE INCOMPLETE)

**Double Life of Private Strong #2**
"Lovable Lou The Toy Maker"
"I Wish I Were The Shield"

**The Fly #1**
"The Strange New World Of The Fly"
"The Fly Strikes"
"The Fly Discovers His Buzz Gun"
"Come Into My Parlor"

**The Fly #2**
"The World's Greatest Hypnotist"
"The Master Of Junk-Ri-La!"

*Continued on page 27*



Archie Comics, was no exception in the "if we throw enough funny books against the wall, some of them are bound to make a profit" sweepstakes. While Archie's flagship teenage characters and its superheroes are well-known by most fans and collectors, there were several titles that are not only as well-known today, but stand as oddities. It is these rare comic series that we'll focus on here.

While many super-hero fanatics are familiar with the Golden Age heroes Archie published under their original "MLJ" imprint and later in their 1960's "Mighty Comics" imprint, there were some offbeat non-spandex adventure titles which were published in the interim. Chief among these were *Sam Hill: Private Eye* (#1-7 1950-1951), *Adventures Of The Dover Boys* (2 issues, 1950), and *The Adventures Of Young Dr. Masters* (2 issues, 1964).

Billed as "America's Hard-Boiled, Wise-Cracking Sleuth," Sam Hill was just that, embroiled in blood-and-guts, wine-and-women mysteries which, being pre-Code, were simultaneously classy and lurid. Like the melodramatic radio shows and pulp magazine potboilers that preceded him, Sam's world was populated by flamboyant characters and mayhem—as well as a hefty heaping of gorgeous gals! These adventures were executed in grand style by Harry Lucey, who would go on to become the premiere Archie artist in the 1960s. His fluid yet clear linework and attention to detail sucks you into the stories, allowing you to enjoy the uncluttered, light entertainment they're meant to be.

Likewise, the Dover Boys tread similar lighthearted ground—a combination of "Indiana Jones" and "The Hardy Boys." Lost treasures, secret caverns, ancient tribes—all are the order of the day as brothers Tim and Dan Dover, orphans of a famous archeologist, endeavor to carry on their father's work and exploits. Aided by Uncle Bill and Aunt Martha, the pair not only face intrigue in far away lands, but must also confront the hateful miser, Silas Croombs and "his ill-tempered, mean and selfish son, Claude."

The last off-beat adventure hero to make the scene was Dr. Masters. No doubt a response to TV's amazingly popular heartthrob, Dr. Ben Casey, David Masters was portrayed as a fit, handsome young man. Yet, instead of carrying on the general family practice, young Dr. Masters yearned for something more. Specifically, he wanted to spend hours in the lab as a medical research scientist—finding new cures instead of administering old

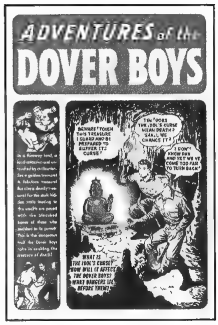
ones. Simultaneously, he also had a knack for finding himself in the middle of desperate situations... like the scene of a holdup, a construction accident, or perhaps a plane crash. It was in these situations that his bravery and heroism shone through.

Within two years of his debut, however, the Batman TV show hit in full force and Archie Comics, who had already begun dusting off their classic superheroes, decided to pursue them in earnest and drop such non-costumed characters as Dr. Masters from their adventure roster.

Another genre into which Archie delved was romance comics. Under their "Close-up" imprint, Archie published two romance titles in the late '40s through early '50s. They were *Darling Romance* and *Darling Love*. These two titles thoroughly ensconced themselves in what had become the standard formula among romance publishers: highly melodramatic tales of unrequited love. The only real difference between them was that *Darling Romance* had photo covers. Other than that, the stories within were on a par with other romance comics of the day, and in fact they shared some things in common with Archie's own *Sam Hill* series: a pre-Code fondness for lurid intensity and somewhat revealing clothing, as well as Harry Lucey as main artist.

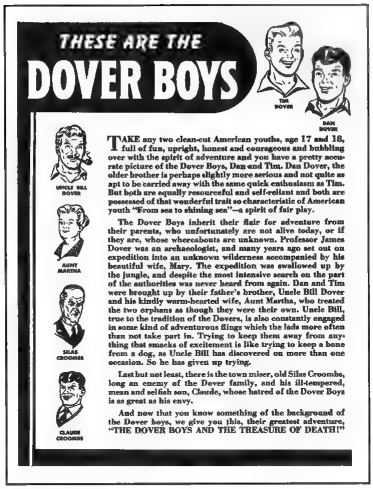
*Darling Romance* #9 features an extra bonus: the artist of "Love Puzzle" is none other than Bernie Krigstein, who signature here is "Bernard Krigstein!" Most of these relatively scarce issues guide at reasonable prices in Good and Fine condition, and are well worth the search. These are truly definitive examples of what romance comics were all about.

Last, but not least, were some of the lesser-known humor titles published by Archie. Of course, humor being Archie's stock-in-trade, there were several such titles in the Golden Age and Silver Age. Many of these characters already have cult followings: Super Duck and Fauntleroy, Little Ambrose, Wilbur, Ginger, Suzie, Pat The Brat, Little Jinx, That Wilkin Boy and of course, Katy Keene, Josie and Sabrina. We'll focus instead on a few Archie humor titles that stand out either due to their brevity or esoteric nature. And what better place to start but with Cosmo The Merry Martian? This wild and wacky series ran from issue #1 (September, 1958) through issue #6 (October, 1959), and featured the art of Bob White. With the same pioneering spirit of our




NASA astronauts, Cosmo, along with his goofy pal Orbi, are determined to be the first Martians to land on Earth! Along the way, they make some pitstops (mostly unplanned) to the Moon, Venus, Saturn and back to Mars again!

With all the recent interest in aliens and outer space travel, perhaps Cosmo's time has come! These stories are delightfully wacky, with a snap and verve to the situations and dialogue that makes them timeless. Especially funny is a bit where Cosmo and Orbi, invisible after being sprayed by comet dust, find themselves in the


THESE ARE THE
DOVER BOYS
TIM DOVER
DAN DOVER
UNCLE BILL DOVER
AUNT MARTHA
SILAS CROOMBS
CLAUDE CROOMBS
TAKE any two clean-cut American youths, age 17 and 16, full of fun, upright, honest and courageous and bubbling over with the spirit of adventure and you have a pretty accurate picture of the Dover Boys, Dan and Tim. Dan Dover, the older brother is perhaps slightly more serious and not quite as apt to be carried away with the same quick enthusiasm as Tim. But both are equally resourceful and self-reliant and both are possessed of that wonderful trait so characteristic of American youth "From sea to shining sea"—a spirit of fair play.
The Dover Boys inherit their flair for adventure from their parents, who unfortunately are not alive today, or if they are, whose whereabouts are unknown. Professor James Dover was an archaeologist, and many years ago set out on expedition into an unknown wilderness accompanied by his beautiful wife, Mary. The expedition was swallowed up by the jungle, and despite the most intensive search on the part of the authorities was never heard from again. Dan and Tim were brought up by their father's brother, Uncle Bill Dover and his kindly warm-hearted wife, Aunt Martha, who treated the two orphans as though they were their own. Uncle Bill, true to the tradition of the Dovers, is also constantly engaged in some kind of adventurous flings which the lads more often than not take part in. Trying to keep them away from anything that smacks of excitement is like trying to keep a bone from a dog, as Uncle Bill has discovered on more than one occasion. So he has given up trying.
Last but not least, there is the town miser, old Silas Croombs, long an enemy of the Dover family, and his ill-tempered, mean and selfish son, Claude, whose hatred of the Dover Boys is as great as his envy.
And now that you know something of the background of the Dover boys, we give you this, their greatest adventure, "THE DOVER BOYS AND THE TREASURE OF DEATH!"

**Published by Close-up (Archie), the Adventures of the Dover Boys #1 (1950) take the famous lads on a hunt for the deadly "treasure of death" on a trail "paved with bleached bones!"**

## THE ARCHIE MYSTIQUE!

Comic books—a truly amazing American art-form for nearly six decades now. In those early years, a plethora of cowled and caped crusaders swept across the four color canvas saving the world from evildoers—and young readers from boredom! As the popularity of these picture magazines became more and more apparent, savvy publishers everywhere searched for the next big character to capture the hearts and minds of the nation's youth.

One such publisher was John Goldwater of MLJ Publications, whose company contributed to the spandex circus with their own line of superhero comics. Until, of course, Goldwater hit upon a novel idea: with so many superheroes to fuel children's fantasies, why not an "everyman" whose down-to-earth exploits would relate to their own everyday lives? The likenesses of the original Archie characters were then created by Bob Montana. Thus, inspired by friends, acquaintances and real life experiences, Archie Andrews, a teen beset with humorous problems was conceived.

*Continued on page 26*

Backed by his co-publishers, Louis H. Silberkleit and Maurice Coyne, they published a six page Archie "test story" in Pep Comics #22 (December, 1941) The story proved so popular that in the winter of 1942, Archie Comics #1 was released—the first title dedicated solely to the adventures of Archie and his friends. The rest is history, as comics featuring these beloved characters have been published ever since.

How has Archie managed to survive for fifty-five years while countless other teen characters have fallen by the wayside? The answer is universality. While the fads and fashions of the times change, and with them, the fads and fashions in the Archie Comics; the basic personalities of the characters and the typical situations they find themselves in remain the same. It is this sameness—the (pardon the pun) archetypal characters and events of growing up—that readers of all generations can relate to.

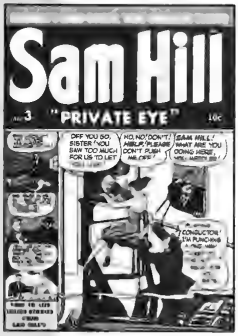
First and foremost are the well developed Archie characters themselves and their relationship to one another. The primary relationship being the Archie, Betty and Veronica love triangle. Archie is smitten with the rich, elusive and unobtainable Veronica Lodge, while loyal, caring Betty Cooper waits patiently for him to notice her. It is this theme of unrequited love that runs deep in American—and International—literature. It also runs deep in life. To quote the J. Geils Band: "You love her, but she loves him, and he loves somebody else—you just can't win!" We've all been there at one time or another.

The personalities of these characters—girl-crazy, clumsy boy (Archie), eccentric best friend (Jughead), dependable, girl-next-door (Betty), daddy's-little-rich-girl (Veronica), conniving malcontent (Reggie) and befuddled adults and establishment are the norm for most teenagers growing up in America. If you weren't one of these types, you knew someone just like them—no matter what the decade!

Speaking of decades, one has to admit—do the problems of teenagers really change that much from generation to generation? The answer, within the Archie universe is a resounding "no!" A pesky pimple, passing an important test, trying to decide who to date, driving your father's car without wrecking it, getting (and keeping) a summer job: these are all part of the timeless joys, triumphs, trials and tribulations of growing up—be it 1957, 1977 or 1997!

Archie and his friends represent a simplistic but endearing aspect of American culture. They have integrity—the type of integrity one can only gain going through the rigors of the teenage years. Along the way, generations of readers have been entertained while seeing a little bit of themselves in the misadventures of these pen and ink pals. Therein lies the mystique—and the ongoing success—of Archie Comics!

## ESOTERIC ARCHIE




middle of a baseball game—with predictable yet highly amusing results. The colorful cast of characters bring this series to life—particularly the shot-out-of-a-cannon moon men. The moon men give new meaning to the word "frenetic"—bouncing, gabbing, bickering and bounding, they are a treat to behold. A vision to behold, on the other hand, is the beguiling Queen Of Venus, depicted, of course, in the best good-girl pin-up tradition! Another unique feature of this series was the fact that it maintained some loose continuity from issue to issue, and in effect can almost be looked at as a maxi-series.

September, 1963's "Seymour My Son" was a one-shot concocted by Henry Scarpelli. While it depicted an Archie-like teen, it's tone was up a few notches. It was flippant, not unlike many of the teen and romantic comedies that were filling movie screens at the time. The comic's story, "My Son, The Teenager" (which, incidentally, almost became the title on the cover) followed the day-in-the-life of a "typical" teenage boy, with often sing-songy captions and dialogue—and ample doses of slapstick.

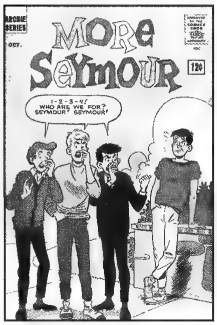
It was followed by a sequel a month later called "More Seymour" which was more Archie-like in its tone. The story centers around Seymour's attempts to avoid yard work and hit the beach, with typical Archie-esque results. These were the only two issues published about this character, a major reason they are sought out today.

Speaking of one-shots, who could forget the one and only *Archie Presents The Official Soupy Sales Comic Book* (see page 80). This 1965 comic may have been a response to the success other publishers were having with movie and TV related characters—certainly, it appears DC's *Jerry Lewis, Bob Hope* and *Dobie Gillis* comics could have inspired the folks at Archie to follow suit.

The comic starts off in typical Soupy zaniness, as he performs his famous dance, "The Mouse," in a six-page story... well, more like a vignette which mirrored his show as he encountered one

loony character and situation after another. The second full story, however, was a departure: "The Adventures Of Philo Kvetch" depicted Sales in fedora and trenchcoat as his hapless detective, hot on the trail of some waterfront smugglers! The rest of the comic had Soupy appearing in one-page gags, with the exception of a three-page Archie story wherein Archie and the gang show what big Soupy fans they are. The Archie crew also share the cover with Soupy. As both a one-shot and a TV related comic, this one holds special appeal to collectors. Beyond that, it is one of the few comics in history ever to depict an actual kiddie show host.

One of the most distinct looking humor titles Archie ever published was Walt Lardner's *Adventures Of Pipsqueak*. This series ran six issues, beginning in September, 1958 with issue #34 (no, that's not a misprint—it picked up the numbering of *Pat The Brat*, which ended at issue #33). Which leads to an interesting point—if Archie already had Pat The Brat, Little Jinx and Little Ambrose, what made Pipsqueak so unique? Simply put, it was the art and writing style of Lardner. Unlike those other tykes who were firmly grounded in the Archie style, Lardner portrayed his little urchin with both a newspaper comic strip flair as well as in the streamlined animation style that dominated most TV commercials of the day. The linework and zippy dialogue, often at the expense of the strip's beleaguered adults, underscore this fact. It remains a standout today when the stories are occasionally reprinted in Archie digests.



While most of Archie's experiments into other territories took place during the Golden Age and Silver Age, there have been a few modern examples as well. Among them: a whole line of horror comics published under the Red Circle Sorcery imprint; a *Super-Cops* one-shot in the mid-1970s depicting real life stories of New York's finest, and of course an array of licensed character comic books based on such TV shows and video games as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Sonic The Hedgehog*. The Golden and Silver Age, however, reflect a time when publishers, though not necessarily driven by artistic concerns, were willing to take a chance on several genres. As the comic industry marches toward the Millennium on uncertain footing, perhaps it's time to take an example from pioneers like Archie Comics and their ilk! ■

**JERRY SIEGEL CREDITS AS THEY APPEAR IN LOG-BOOK**
(MAY BE INCOMPLETE)

**Adventures of the Fly #29**
"The Fly's Worst Enemy"
"The Slave Of King Spider"
**Adventures of the Fly #30**
"The World's Wackiest Crook!"
"Fly Girl Meets The Comet!"
**The Shadow #5**
"The Menace Of Radiation Rogue"
"Doom Strikes The Shadow"
**The Shadow #6**
"The Incredible Alliance Of Shiwan Khan and Attila The Hunter!"
"The Captive Of Terror Island!"
**The Shadow #7**
"The Shadow Battles... The Brute!"
"The Shadow's Amazing New Weapons!"
"The Shadow On Gargoyle Island!"
**The Shadow #8**
"The Game Of Death!"
**Fly Man #31**
"The Wicked Web of the Wily Spider!"
**Fly Man #32**
"Eterno The Tyrant"
**Fly Man #33**
"Fly Man's Treacherous Team-Mates"
**Fly Man #34**
"The Creature From The Abyss"
"Evilo The Tempter" (starring The Shield)
**Fly Man #35**
"Phantasmon The Terrible"
"The Thousand Foes Of The Shield"
"The Origin Of The Black Hood"
**Fly Man #36**
"Fly Man's Strangest Dilemma"
"Suffer, Shield, Suffer"
"Origin Of The Web"
**Fly Man #37**
"Pawn Of The Ultra-Foes"
"The Gladiator From Tomorrow" (starring The Shield)
**Mighty Crusaders #2**
"The Mighty Crusaders Battle Inferno, The Destroyer"
"The Origin Of The Comet"
**Mighty Crusaders #3**
"Evil Lurks Among Us"
"The Origin Of Fly Man"
**Mighty Crusaders #4**
"Too Many Super Heroes"
**Mighty Crusaders #7**
"The Monster-Master" (starring Steel Sterling)
"The Origin Of Fly Girl"
**Mighty Comics Presents #41**
"The Shield vs. The Black Hood"

# Golden Girls

by Ray Connell

Everyone knows about Wonder Woman and Phantom Lady... but what about the other top books featuring the greatest super heroines of the 1940s? Are there any "sleepers" left?

For many comic collectors, one of the most rewarding facets of this hobby is identifying, and eventually acquiring, those rare gems that seem to have been ignored by the majority of their peers. As time passes and prices continue to climb, these bargains have become fewer and further between. Surprisingly enough though, there are still quite a few to be found, particularly in books published during the Golden Age. Over the past thirty years, heroes such as Batman, Superman, and Captain America have been lightning rods for collectors attention, however, there remains many other books featuring well-known characters and talented creators that are still remarkably affordable... especially when compared to other key books with male heroes!

During the search for these "sleepers," one bias became glaringly obvious. I'm referring to the surprisingly low prices on key issues that either introduce or feature female characters. Now I realize that comic fans, particularly those of the superhero genre, have always tended to be male, so it comes as no great shock that these books have languished for as long as they have, but when you consider the popularity, longevity, and historical significance of many of these heroines (not to mention the relative scarcity of all Golden Age comics) surely this can't last forever. The following dozen issues are prime example of some of the best values in the market today.

As you review my top dozen "Golden Girl" picks, please note that some books like *All Star* #8, *Sensation* #1, and *Wonder Woman* #1 are squarely in the "already discovered" category. And even though *Phantom Lady* #17 can also be described that way, the GD and VG prices are still affordable. But beyond these four, look at the prices (especially the Good, VG, and Fine prices) on the others. Some of these great books still guide at amazingly low prices and may still be accurately referred to as sleepers!

## All-Star Comics #8

(DC, December 1941/January 1942) The origin and first appearance of Wonder Woman. DC's three most significant and well-recognized characters of the last 50+ years are undoubtedly Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. With recent sales of high grade copies of both *Action* #1 and *Detective* #27 going for well over $100,000 each, it's a little hard to believe that this particular issue still guides at only a fourth of that in NM! That's well below the prices realized for high grade copies featuring the debuts of other "lesser known" DC heroes such as the Spectre, the Sandman, and even

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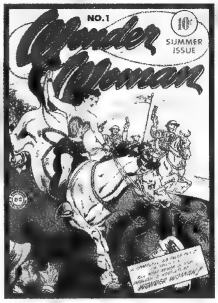


**With Fine copies still guiding at amazingly low prices, Master Comics #13 and Captain Marvel Adventures #18 (FACING PAGE) are now high demand Golden Age Fawcett keys.**

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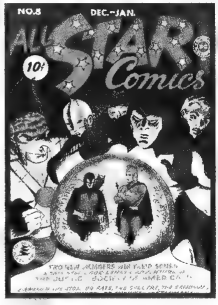

Hourman. While I realize that there has always been a disparity in the value of comics featuring super heroines vs. your average superhero title, surely Wonder Woman–the most successful female hero of all time –should be able to buck this trend. (GD $2,400, VG $4,500, FN $6,600, VF $15,300, NM $24,000)

## Sensation Comics #1

(DC, January 1942) Almost immediately after her first appearance in the pages of *All-Star Comics*, Wonder Woman premieres as the star feature in this long-running DC anthology title. This issue also launched the comic careers of two of DC's better known second-stringers from the Golden Age; Wildcat and Mr. Terrific. (GD $2,000 VG $4,000, FN $$6,000, VF $13,000, NM $20,000)

## Wonder Woman #1

(DC, Summer 1942) Readers are treated to a more detailed and coherent origin, as Wonder Woman receives her own title. If for no other reason, this book is historically significant as the first title devoted to a super heroine. In addition to that distinction, it has also been published continuously (except for a brief hiatus during 1986) since it's debut nearly 54 years ago, a feat exceeded by only four other titles in comic history… Detective, Action, Superman, and Batman… and all DC, by the way. (GD $1,650, VG $3,300, FN $4,950, VF $9,900, NM $16,500)

## Flash Comics #86

(DC, August 1947) Black Canary debuts as a guest in a Johnny Thunder story. Over the years, through a series of extensive and oftentimes confusing retro-active continuity twists, she has become one of only two DC super heroines (the other being Hawkgirl) to play a part in the company's history from the Golden Age through to the present. A Justice Society member in the '40s and '50s, a Justice League member during the '70s and '80s and if all that is not enough for you, I only have two further words–fishnet stockings! A hard to find book in high grade due to the white cover, but well worth the search. (GD $212, VG $425, FN $637, VF $1,169, NM $1,700)

## Master Comics #13

(Fawcett, April 1941) Origin and first appearance of Bulletgirl. Contrary to popular belief, she was the first costumed heroine in comics (Miss Fury premiered this same month, but in newspaper strips). In a bold departure from the burgeoning trend of juvenile sidekicks, Fawcett introduces the world's first co-ed crime fighting team. Bulletman and Bulletgirl were featured in *Master Comics,* and later in their own title (for the rest of the decade), plus were second only to the Marvel Family in popularity at Fawcett. A Golden Age comic milestone which guides for less than $600 in Fine! (GD $181, VG $358, FN $534, VF $992, NM $1,450)

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**Both Flash #86 (ABOVE) introducing the Black Canary and Flash #92 (NOT PICTURED, with its phenomenal white-background cover) have become among the highest demand GA Flash comics in the run.**

## Captain Marvel Adventures #18

(Fawcett, December 1942) Mary Marvel makes her debut as Billy (Captain Marvel) Batson learns of his long lost sister. Arguably the second most famous super heroine to be created during the Golden Age, after Wonder Woman. Mary Marvel later went on to be featured in two titles by Fawcett; *Wow Comics* and *Marvel Family,* as well as her own book. She has also just recently been resurrected in Jerry Ordway's wonder Power of Shazam series from DC Comics, and that added exposure can only help escalate prices on her Golden Age appearances. A Fine copy for guide is an incredible bargain! (GD $156, VG $312, FN $468, VF $859, NM $1,250)

## Pocket Comics #1

(Harvey, August, 1941) The origin and first appearance of the Black Cat. Long before Harvey Publications made their mark with Casper and Baby Huey, they first appeared on the comic stands with this title. The Black Cat was Harvey's first, and most popular original

hero. She was also the first super heroine to appear in her own ongoing comic series, five months prior to Wonder Woman's debut in *Sensation Comics*. A steal at a mere $253 in FN. (GD $84, VG $169, FN $253, VF $464, NM $675)

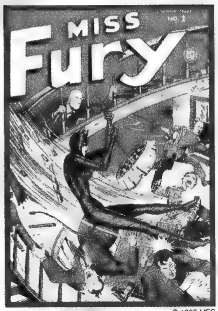
## Black Cat Comics #1

(Harvey, June/July 1946) After four years as a back-up feature in Speed Comics, the Black Cat finally receives her own title. Although it went through a number of changes over the years depending upon the popular genre du jour (i.e. *Black Cat Western, Black Cat Mystery, Black Cat Mystic*, etc.) it was nonetheless one of the handful of titles from the Golden Age to last through the '50s and into the Silver Age. Guides at about $150 in FN. (GD $53, VG $105, FN $158, VF $289, NM $420)

## Miss Fury #1

(Timely, Winter 1942) Timely's first excursion into the world of super heroines was this series of reprints from Tarpe Mills' classic Miss Fury newspaper strip. Mills' character was not only one of the comic mediums' first female costumed crime fighters (debuting in April '41), but her outfit, actions, and demeanor helped to set the standard of "good girl" art against which all future women-in-tights would be measured. An important character, and an important, albeit hard to find book. (GD $300, VG $600, FN $900, VF $1,650, NM $2,400)

**A sleeper for many years, Tarpe Mills' classic first issue of Miss Fury (TOP CENTER) is now in demand by both Timely/Marvel collectors as well as "good girl" art fans.**

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**With the NM guide listing hovering below $500 and FN near $150, Black Cat Comics #1 is a true GA sleeper!**

## Marvel Mystery Comics #49

(Timely, November 1943) The origin and first appearance of Miss America. Timely finally gets around to creating their first super heroine. While Miss America was initially conceived as a fair sex homage to Captain America, she went on to become Timely's most popular and longest running female star of the 40's, and eventually wound up battling evil alongside the rest of Timely's major heroes in the short-lived All-Winners Squad. One of the few remaining Timely sleepers at guiding at less than $500 for a FN copy! (GD $143, VG $287, FN $431, VF $791, NM $1,150)

## Marvel Mystery Comics #82

(Timely, May 1947) Origin and first appearance of the Sub-Mariner's cousin, Namora. As the Golden Age drew to a close, Timely tried teaming their fading big stars–Cap, Namor, and the Torch–with female partners in an attempt to attract a growing audience of young women to their titles. Of these new heroines, Namora was the most successful, possibly due to the fact that she wasn't seen as usurping the role of any pre-existing sidekick. She was also Timely's only super heroine from the Golden Age to be adapted into current Marvel continuity as her own daughter/clone–Namorita. Finally, on a purely aesthetic level, I love the cover! A real steal at only $600 in FN. (GD $200, VG $400, FN $600, VF $1,100, NM $1,600)

## Phantom Lady #17

(Fox, April 1948) As most *CBM* readers know, while '40s drew to a close and sales on comics featuring costumed heroes

### GOLDEN GIRL PRICES (FROM OVERSTREET'S CBPG #27)

| | GD | VG | FN | VF | NM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black Cat Comics #1 | $53 | $105 | $158 | $289 | $420 |
| Pocket Comics #1 | $84 | $169 | $253 | $464 | $675 |
| Marvel Mystery #49 | $143 | $287 | $431 | $791 | $1,150 |
| Captain Marvel Adv. #18 | $156 | $312 | $468 | $859 | $1,250 |
| Master Comics #13 | $181 | $358 | $534 | $992 | $1,450 |
| Marvel Mystery #82 | $200 | $400 | $600 | $1,100 | $1,600 |
| Flash Comics #86 | $212 | $425 | $637 | $1,169 | $1,700 |
| Miss Fury #1 | $300 | $600 | $900 | $1,650 | $2,400 |
| Phantom Lady #17 | $422 | $844 | $1,266 | $2,533 | $3,800 |
| Wonder Woman #1 | $1,650 | $3,300 | $4,950 | $9,900 | $16,500 |
| Sensation #1 | $2,000 | $4,000 | $6,000 | $13,000 | $20,000 |
| All-Star #8 | $2,400 | $4,500 | $6,600 | $15,300 | $24,000 |

began to wane, many publishers began to exploit a new trend of storytelling and artwork that would later come to be known as "good girl" art which featured an emphasis on bondage, sado-masochism, and scantily-clad women. The cream of this new crop of titles came from Fox Features, and their greatest female character was a revamped (pun intended) former Quality Comics heroine, Phantom Lady. While all issues featured artwork by premiere "good girl" artist Matt Baker, #17 has become a hobby icon and stands apart from the rest with one of the most attractive and well-recognized covers from the Golden Age. A great addition for any collection and a true classic! Even with all the recent publicity and demand, this book can still be had for less than a grand for a VG copy. (GD $422, VG $844, FN $1,266, VF $2,533, NM $3,800)

Well, that's all for this issue. Be sure to keep the Golden Girls in mind the next time some space opens up on the ol' want list, and–of course–if the funds are available in the 'ol checkbook. I'll be back soon with another list of sleepers from the Golden Age. Until then, good luck and happy hunting. ■

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**With a FN price of Marvel Mys. #82 now at $600, the FN listing for Marvel Mystery #49 of $431 (published 3½ years earlier) seems more than reasonable. Collectors think so too, and demand for Miss America's debut issue continues to rise.**

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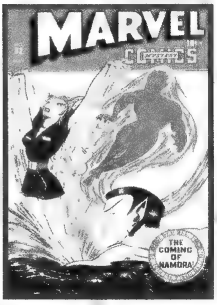



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*What's Hot? What's Not?*

The answers may surprise you!

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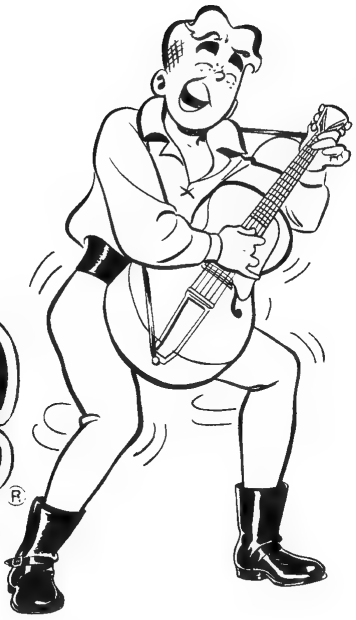
*ing's...*

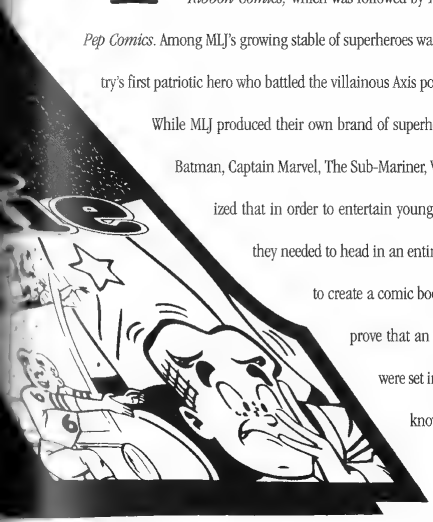
by
Jeffrey C. Branch

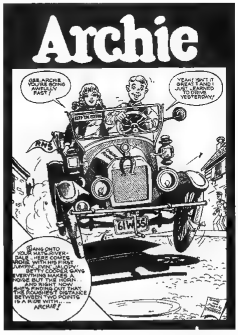
# rchie®

## nside story of Archie Comics



The legend that is Archie Comics began inauspiciously in 1939 with the birth of a new comic book company called MLJ Magazines, named after its three partners and founders, Maurice Coyne (M), Louis Silberkleit (L) and John Goldwater (J). The company's first title was called *Blue Ribbon Comics,* which was followed by *Top Notch Comics* and then, in January 1940, *Pep Comics*. Among MLJ's growing stable of superheroes was The Shield, said to be the comic book industry's first patriotic hero who battled the villainous Axis powers.



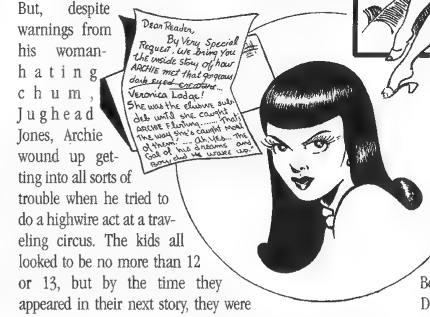


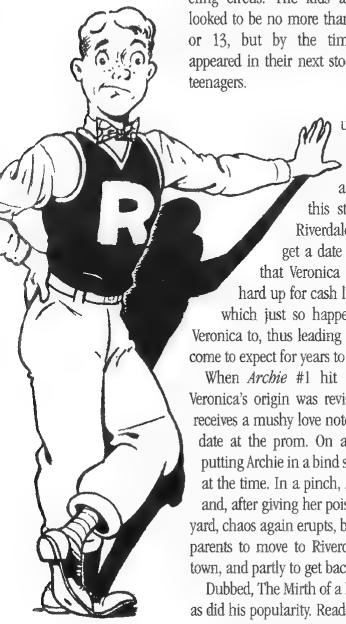

While MLJ produced their own brand of superheroes to compete with the likes of Superman, Batman, Captain Marvel, The Sub-Mariner, Wonder Woman and the like, its founders realized that in order to entertain younger readers, and, in particular, female readers, they needed to head in an entirely different direction. John Goldwater wanted to create a comic book character that was grounded in reality, and prove that an ordinary person could be just as popular. And thus the wheels were set into motion that would eventually give birth to the phenomenon known as Archie.

# Archie

Goldwater's inspiration for Archie Andrews came partly from the old Mickey Rooney movie series, Andy Hardy, crediting an actual high school friend of his, named, ironically enough, Archie. During their days at the New York Teachers' Training School, Goldwater recalls, "I felt like Jughead to him. I was a very loyal friend." With his lead character in hand, Goldwater brought together a stable of writers, editors and artists, including Bob Montana (who would become the principal artist on the strip) creator of the likenesses of the original Archie characters.

Without any fanfare, the very first Archie story appeared in the hero laden pages of *Pep Comics* #22 in December of 1941. In that story, Archie (who, for some odd reason demanded to be called Chick) sought to impress the new girl in the neighborhood, Betty Cooper. But, despite warnings from his woman-hating chum, Jughead Jones, Archie wound up getting into all sorts of trouble when he tried to do a highwire act at a traveling circus. The kids all looked to be no more than 12 or 13, but by the time they appeared in their next story, they were teenagers.


Dear Reader,
By Very Special Request, we bring you the inside story of how ARCHIE met that gorgeous dish type—creature... Veronica Lodge!
She was the elusive sub-deb until she caught ARCHIE playing... Find the way she's caught now! Oh, Archie, you scamp, you! Get on with the wrake 'em!




**The Golden Age Veronica was often portrayed as a raven-haired femme fatale who's overtly seductive facial expressions, poses, clothing, and exposed anatomy made her the fantasy of every teenage boy who read Archie Comics during the 1940s.**

Comicdom's most famous, and fabulous rich girl, Veronica Lodge made her debut in *Pep Comics* #26 (April 1942), and life would never again be the same for poor Archie. In this story, Veronica had just moved to Riverdale and Archie somehow managed to get a date with her. When Jughead tells Arch that Veronica is a rich debutante, Arch, forever hard up for cash lands a job at a swanky restaurant, which just so happens to be the same one he takes Veronica to, thus leading to the sort of chaos readers would come to expect for years to come from Archie.

When *Archie* #1 hit the newsstands later that year, Veronica's origin was revised. In this new telling, Veronica receives a mushy love note from Archie, asking her to be his date at the prom. On a lark, the flighty heiress accepts, putting Archie in a bind since he was going steady with Betty at the time. In a pinch, Arch gets Jughead to be her escort, and, after giving her poison ivy from, of all places, a graveyard, chaos again erupts, but later on, Veronica convinces her parents to move to Riverdale, mostly because she likes the town, and partly to get back at Archie!

Dubbed, The Mirth of a Nation, the visibility of Archie grew, as did his popularity. Readers were demanding to see more of Archie and his friends, and the powers that be at MLJ readily satisfied those demands. The company increased Archie's presence in the still superhero prevalent *Pep Comics*, culminating with Archie's first appearance on the cover of *Pep* #36 in 1943. Then, in *Pep* #49, Archie got the lead story in that book over The Shield. By 1944, MLJ's superheroes were slowly starting to be phased out in favor of the ever increasingly popular Archie.

One of the emerging themes that made Archie so popular with his growing legion of fans was The Eternal Triangle. *Archie* #7 (March 1944) heralded the beginning of the teenaged menage á trois between Archie, Betty and Veronica. This story, in which Archie tries to keep a movie date with both girls at the same time on the same night at the same theater would be the catalyst for thousands and thousands of stories over the decades as perpetually indecisive Archie had nothing but trouble trying to choose between sweet and lovable Betty or rich and spoiled Veronica.

During World War II as America fought in Europe and the Pacific, pin-up girls like Betty Grable became enormously popular with soldiers, sailors and marines, and this led to the emergence of the most popular pin-up girl in the history of comic books–Katy Keene! Created by Bill Woggon, Katy, debuting in *Wilbur Comics* #5 (1945) was a tall, dark-haired beauty queen who attracted all kinds of male suitors while keeping her cute but mischieviously candy crazed kid sister out of trouble. Katy, like Archie was an overnight smash, thus leading to more appearances.

YOU ALWAYS SAY YOU'D DIE FOR MY SAKE, BUT YOU NEVER DO!
BUT YOU WANT ME TO BE A--PIN CUSHION IN SEWING CLASS..WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM, A DUMMY? (DON'T ANSWER THAT!)
R

Katy would quickly become a fixture in *Wilbur* and other Archie series comics until she got her own regular comic in

1949. By then, Bill had assembled quite a charming cast of characters to go along with Katy, chief among them: her rich and glamorous rival, Gloria Granbilt, pretty, but superstitous redhead Lucki Lorelei, K.O. Kelly, Katy's pugilistic boyfriend and Randy Von Ronson, a wealthy suitor of Katy and a rival of K.O. It was no secret that a goodly amount of servicemen were fans and readers of Katy.

What made Katy Keene so immensely popular with fans was that readers were encouraged to send in fashion designs for Katy and her friends. Not just fashions, but designs for houses, cars, boats, just about anything, with recognition given when their designs were shown in the book. And, when it came to fashions for Katy, Gloria and Lucki, it wasn't just girls who submitted designs, boys and grown men of all ages submitted fashions as well! Katy would enjoy enormous success, second only to Archie himself until her book was cancelled in 1961.

In 1946, a dramatic turning point was reached as MLJ Magazines adopted the name of what had now become its flagship character and officially became Archie Comics Publications. The change coincided with the new editorial direction which focused entirely on the humorous exploits of Archie Andrews and his friends and less on superheroes. In the fall of that year, Archie Comics released *Laugh Comics* which, like *Pep* would feature Archie and other humorous characters. Then, just before the decade ended, yet another title was added: *Archie's Pal Jughead*.

As the '40s yielded to the '50s, the appeal of Archie only grew in strength, as did the entire genre of teenage humor comics which literally sprung up overnight. Virtually every other comic book company, seeing what was happening with Archie put out similar books, trying to capitalize on the Archie mystique, but no one did even a fraction as well as Archie did. Most of those companies either folded or returned to producing superhero books. Archie's formula for success was to remain contemporary with the times in terms of fashions, slang and the fads and pastimes of the day.

The 1950s would see a tremendous expansion of the Archie empire as new titles shot off from the three parent books, *Archie*, *Pep Comics* and *Laugh Comics*. First and foremost was *Archie's Girls Betty & Veronica*. Having begun as a back-up feature in Archie, Betty and Veronica incessantly plotted, schemed and fought over Archie, and any other boy they came across while maintaining a humorous arm's length friendship with each other. The girls' misadventures (some complete with hilarious catfights) would soon become a key part of the Archie legend.

The concept of *Archie's JokeBook* was as unique as they came during that particular time, showing just how innovative the people running Archie Comics truly were. This book didn't feature any actual stories with all the other books, instead it had Archie and his friends barraging the readers with loads of gags and jokes, most of them corny as sin while others were screamingly funny. It should also be noted here that one of the legends of the comic book industry, artist Neal Adams got his start in the business drawing for *Archie's JokeBook*.

**The original Betty before she became a Veronica look-alike!**

**In a charming flashback, Archie first meets Betty as a pre-teen, showing off on his bicycle.**

*Life With Archie* was yet another unique Archie title. *LWA* would be the company's first, and most enduring adventure-based title as it featured Archie and

Archie
BOB MONTANA
VIC BLOOM
JUST A MATTER OF SKILL, THAT'S ALL!
HERE Y'ARE, GANG, AMERICA'S NEWEST BOY FRIEND, ARCHIE ANDREWS, CHRISTENED ARCHIBALD. HE HATES ARCHIE, SO IF YOU VALUE LIFE AND LIMB, CALL HIM "CHICK". RIGHT NOW HE'S RISKING LIFE AND LIMB TO IMPRESS HIS NEW NEIGHBOR — BETTY COOPER....
HYAH. M'NAME'S ARCHIE, BUT CALL ME CHICK. YOU'RE NEW HERE, AIN'T YOU?
UH, HUH. MOVING IN TODAY. I'M BETTY COOPER, AND I THINK YOU'RE AWFUL CLEVER.
THAT'S NOTHIN', I COULD EVEN WALK THIS FENCE BLINDFOLDED?
REALLY?

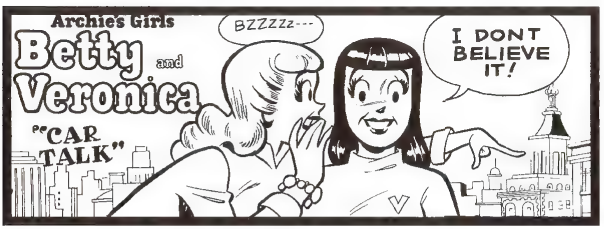
# Archie

his friends engaging in exciting exploits in and beyond the city limits of Riverdale. In the early years of *LWA*'s run, the stories were all book length and saw the gang travel to such places as Washington, across country to Hollywood (where an obsessed Betty risked life and limb to get a popular movie star's autograph) and even across the ocean for adventures in Paris and Italy.

In addition to the jumbo sized yearly editions of *Archie, Jughead* and *Betty & Veronica*, the company's first regular giant book was *Archie's Pals 'N' Gals*. Every issue of *Pals 'N' Gals* topped out at a whopping 64 pages (as did the other jumbo books), easily making it the largest comic book of its day that was published more than yearly. Along with great stories by the company's top talents, *Pals 'N' Gals* also featured, as an enticing treat for fans, Betty and Veronica pin-ups and fashion pages, something which would become a staple in the book well into the early '70s.

Over the succeeding years, the rest of the Archie cast of characters would develop and become part of Americana: Pop Tate, the fat and friendly proprietor of Pop's Chock'Lit Shoppe (said to be the inspiration for Arnold's on the hit TV series Happy Days), Reggie Mantle, who debuted in the '40s became Archie's chief rival and nemesis; Moose Mason, a lumbering but lovable slow witted ox, along with his diminutive girlfriend Midge, Dilton Doiley, the brainy bookworm and Big Ethel, the ugly duckling hopelessly smitten with Jughead.

Since most of Archie's adventures took place at Riverdale




High, it spawned a faculty that more than held their own in the humor department: Mr. Weatherbee, the pompous, overweight windbag of a principal for whom Archie would be his personal bane; Miss Grundy, the tough but tender spinster of a teacher; Coach Kleats who coached EVERY varsity sport at school; Professor Flutesnoot, the science teacher who took his life in his hands whenever he lets trouble prone Archie mix chemicals in the lab, and Miss Beazley, the grouchy chef of the school's cafeteria.

Another aspect regarding the popularity of Archie was in how

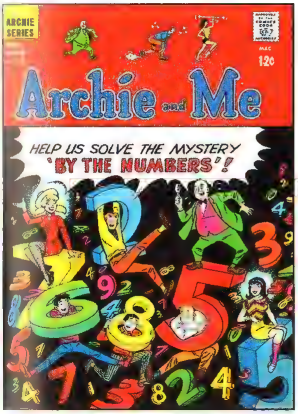
the people who ran the company cashed in on the trends and fads of the day, and during the '60s, they made hay on two such sensations of the day: spies and superheroes. During the mid '60s, when the Cold War was at its height, one of the most popular TV series on the air was *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*. Archie tapped into this media phenomenon with a successful parody of spy stories with Archie as the Man From R.I.V.E.R.D.A.L.E. as he and his fellow agents battled the evil minions of C.R.U.S.H.

Then, there was *Batman*. When the camp driven TV show debuted on ABC and became a smash hit, the folks at Archie wasted no time cooking up a parody of their own. In *Life With Archie* #42 (October 1965), Archie joined the cape and spandex set as Pureheart the Powerful. These hilarious stories, with Archie as a semi-competent superhero was so wildly received by Archie fans, the rest of the gang eventually joined in as Jughead became the crown hatted Captain Hero, Reggie as the nefarious Evilheart and Betty as the courageous Superteen.

Beyond the world of comic books, Archie was making inroads in other mainstream media outlets, such as a popular radio show back in the '40s for nearly a decade, but as the '60s rolled around, Archie's popularity would skyrocket, thanks to television. In 1968, Filmation produced an Archie cartoon show that would go on to be one of the most popular Saturday morning animated series of all times, garnering, at its zenith, an astonishing seventy-five percent of the Neilsen audience, and would run in several different formats until 1976.

The success of Archie on television would spawn similar series. First was *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* which was also produced by Filmation and would lead to her own regular comic book late in the '60s, then there was *Josie and the Pussycats* which was produced by the top animation studio of the day, Hanna-Barbera and featured Cheryl Ladd of Charlie's Angels' fame as the voice of ditzy Melody. In the case of *Josie*, the cartoon show would go a long way in revitalizing and permanently changing the entire scope of the accompanying comic book.

*(continued on page 45)*



ADVENTURES of the
DOVER BOYS
BEWARE! TOUCH THIS TREASURE I GUARD AND BE BURNED TO A BUTTER, IT'S CURSE!
TIM! DOES THE IDOL'S CURSE MEAN DEATH? SMALL WT CHANGE IT?
I DON'T KNOW DAN AND YET WE'VE COME TOO FAR TO TURN BACK!
WHAT IS THE IDOL'S CURSE? HOW WILL IT AFFECT THE DOVER BOYS? WHAT DANGERS LIE BEFORE THEM?

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Reggie and Me
OH ROBBERS! I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING! THE ROTTER MISSING GET'S THE BANK LOOT!
DON'T BE MR. EVILHEART! MY KIND WILL MAKE YOU ROTTEN!
BEYPEE! MY MISSILE NEXT IS ROTTING RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER ME!
FIRST BANK
AT LAST! A SUPER VILLAIN WHO IS A REAL ROTTER...IN FACT, THE MOST ROTTEN DOER OF ALL TIME! READ...
RING OF RUIN!
ZAP!

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MYSTERY
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AUG.
COMICS
BUT, MISTER POLICEMAN, I KNOW WHERE THE CROOKS ARE!!
THAT'S ME TALKING ABOUT! WHAT A LITTLE JERK I'VE BECOME IN A POLICE STATION! IT'S A MYSTERY TO ME!
MYSTERIOUS, SUSPENSEFUL, DEADLY AND DANGEROUS!

AMERICA'S HARD-BOILED, WISE-CRACKING SLEUTH
Sam Hill
NO. 4 "PRIVATE EYE"
10¢
HE'S ASLEEP, ALL RIGHT... ONLY IT'S PERMANENT!
CALL SAM HILL TO THE STAND!
CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY, SAM! MY BOYS WILL BE WATCHING YOU!
TELL 'EM TO LISTEN REAL CLOSE, TOO! THEY'LL HEAR THE WHOLE TRUTH... AND NOTHING BUT!
YOU BY BEAUTIFUL BART, BUT YOU'LL PAY THE SAME AS ANY MURDERER!
IF WE DO, YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE THAT WITNESS CHAIR ALIVE!
CALLING ALL CARS! PICK UP SAM HILL, WANTED FOR MURDER!

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SUPER HEROES
SUPER VILLAINS
25¢
FLAP!
OOOF!

ADVENTURES OF
THE
FLY
SEPT.
12¢

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The Mirth of a Nation
Archie
comics
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1963
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The JAGUAR
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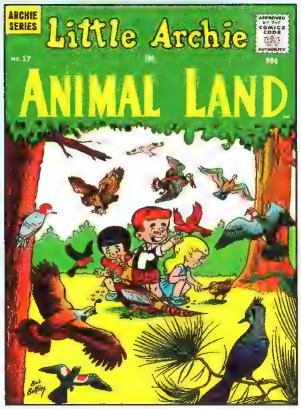
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Little Archie
ANIMAL LAND

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Archie's
Christmas
Stocking
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4TH ISSUE
HMM... NEVER MIND THE DECORATIONS FOR ARCHIE'S CHRISTMAS TREE, REGGIE! HE HAS JUST THE DECORATIONS HE WANTS! ...A COUPLE OF DOLLS!

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FIRST TIME IN ANY COMIC BOOK! FUREHEART THE POWERFUL SUPERTEEN, CAPT. HERO TOGETHER!
WHAT EVIL CAN PREVAIL AGAINST THESE INVINCIBLE HEROES...
UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL!
THE UNITED THREE!
SAY IT AGAIN, VERONICA! I LIKE THE SOUND OF IT!
REGGIE IS THE GREATEST!
MEH!
EVILHEART, MAD Dr. DOOM AND THE REST OF THE BAD GUYS TEAM UP TO DO UNDERMINE THE UNITED THREE IN THIS FULL-LENGTH THRILLER...
THE DOORWAY TO TERROR!

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HERE ARE JUST FIVE OF THE MANY ARTICLES YOU'LL FIND IN THIS JAM-PACKED ISSUE!
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EASY-TO-MAKE KITCHEN AIDS
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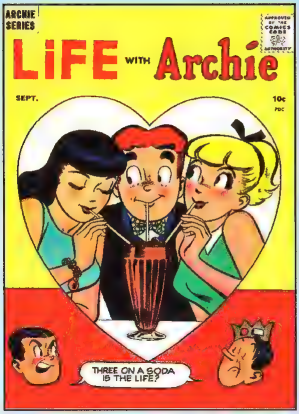
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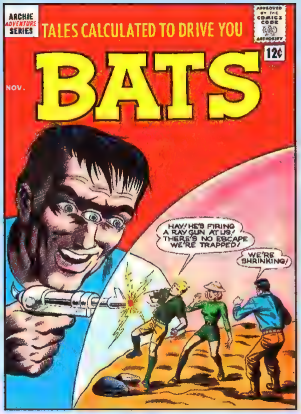
THREE ON A SODA IS THE LIFE?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THIS IS FOR ME!
THAT'S MY PAL JUGHEAD
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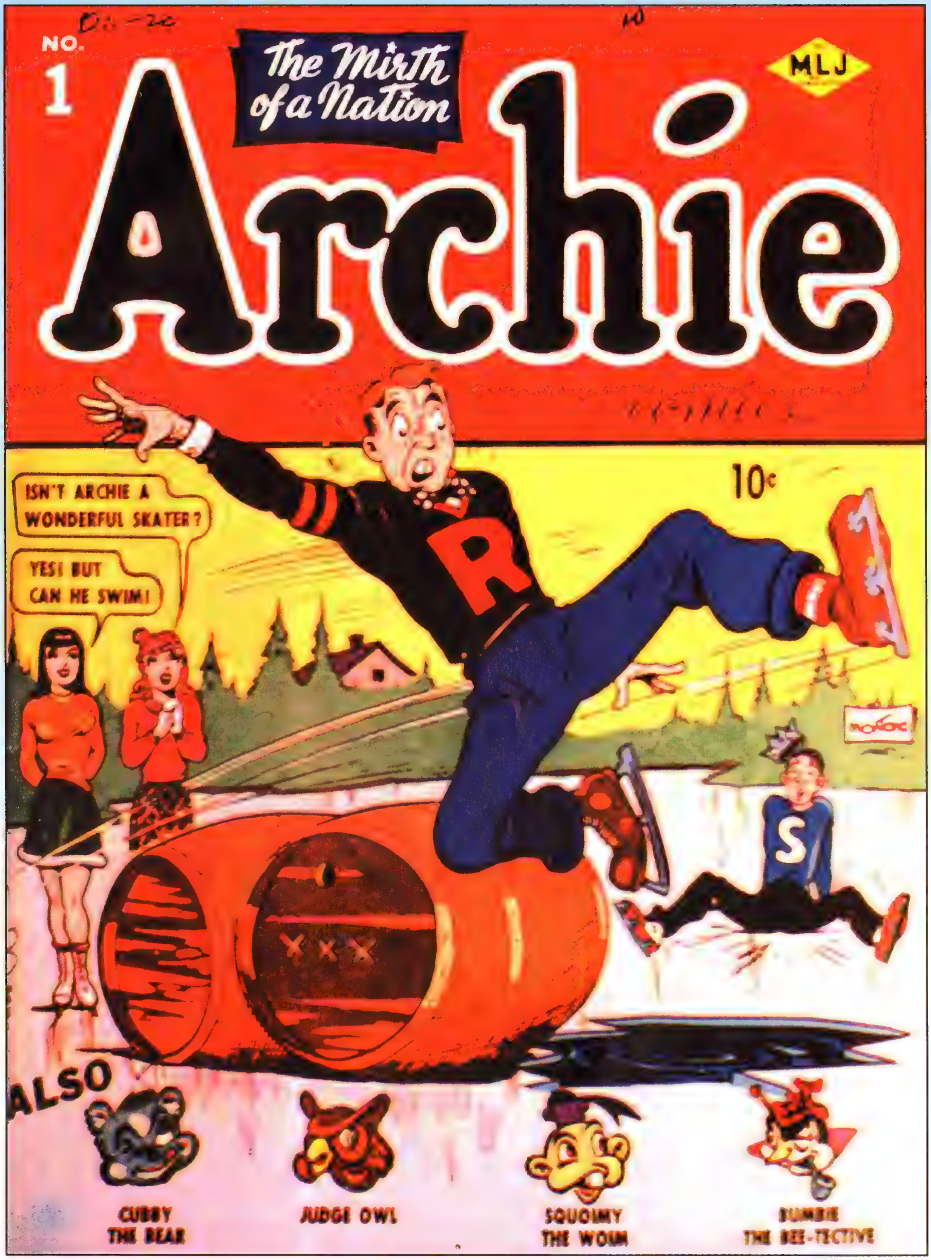
I'D LOVE TO, ARCHIE! YOU CAN PICK ME UP AT EIGHT!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The Mirth of a Nation
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ISN'T ARCHIE A WONDERFUL SKATER?
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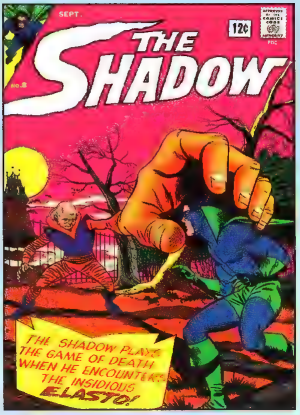
Stocking
ONE FOR ...ALL
AND ALL FOR...
...ONE!
LISTEN TO THEM
MAKIN' WITH THE
SLOGANS! MY SLOGAN
IS STILL THE SAME!
LESS SPEECH AND
MORE EAT!

QUEEN OF PIN-UPS AND FASHIONS
ARCHIE SERIES
KATY KEENE
NO FISHES ALLOWED
FOR THIS WEIRD
CLOTHES CRAZE!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WHEN HE ENCOUNTERS
THE INSIDIOUS
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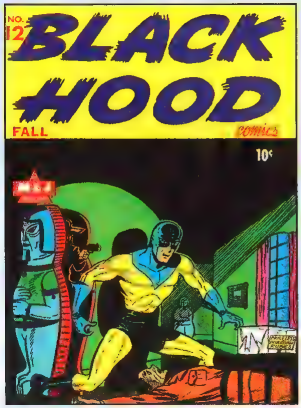
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FALL
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IRONFIST
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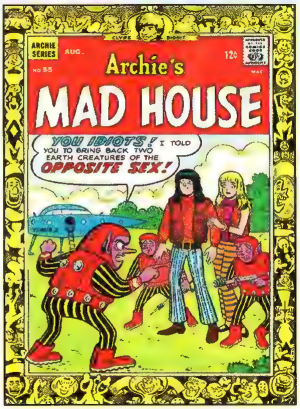
CAPTAIN HERO
12¢
by DICK, VIC, BOB and BILL
CAPTAIN HERO, SAVE US!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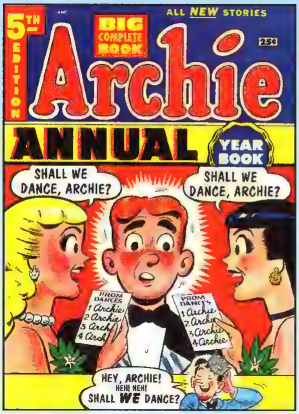
Archie's
MAD HOUSE
YOU IDIOTS! I TOLD YOU TO BRING BACK TWO EARTH CREATURES OF THE OPPOSITE SEX!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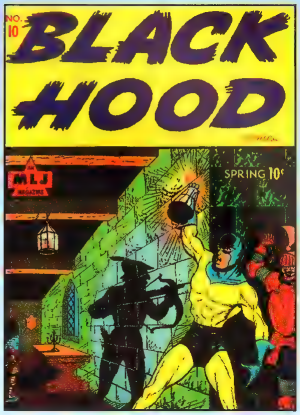
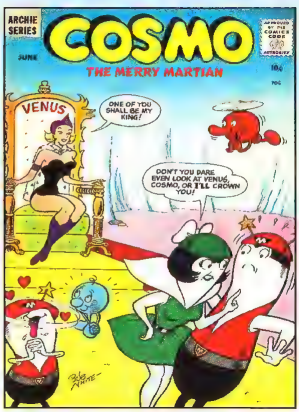
BIG COMPLETE BOOK
ALL NEW STORIES
Archie
ANNUAL
YEAR BOOK
SHALL WE DANCE, ARCHIE?
SHALL WE DANCE, ARCHIE?
HEY, ARCHIE! HERE HERE! SHALL WE DANCE?

GAGS 'N' GALS GALORE
Archie's JOKE BOOK
HERE COMES ARCHIE! I HOPE HE LIKES MY NEW DRESS! IT COST ME A FORTUNE!
HELLO ARCHIE! DIDN'T YOU NOTICE ANYTHING NEW?
NOT SHOULD I?
ARCHIEKINS! YOU HOO!
HIYA, LIL SUGARBUN!
SAY! THAT'S A CUTE LITTLE MOLE UNDER YOUR LEFT EAR!
OH ARCHIEKINS! YOU'RE SO OBSERVANT!


NO. 10
BLACK HOOD
MLJ
SPRING 10¢

NO. 2
Archie's Girls
ALL NEW STORIES
ARCHIE SERIES
Betty and Veronica
BOYS ARE CUTE, WE MUST CONFESS, BUT THEY'RE JUST LIKE A GAME OF CHESS--
THE WAY WE MAKE 'EM JUMP JUST PROVES THAT IT'S US GIRLS WHO MAKE THE MOVES!

Archie
PEP COMICS
67
Starring ARCHIE ANDREWS!
AUNTIE VERONICA ISN'T HOME TONIGHT, ARCHIE! WILL I DO?


ARCHIE SERIES
COSMO
THE MERRY MARTIAN
VENUS
ONE OF YOU SHALL BE MY KING!
DON'T YOU DARE ERVIN LOOK AT VENUS, COSMO, OR I'LL CROWN YOU!

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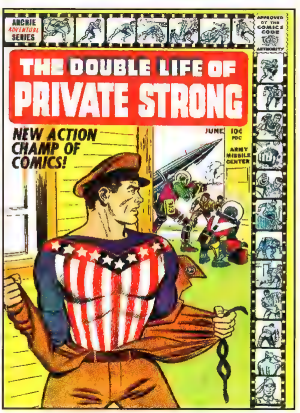
PEP COMICS
FEB. 10¢
DUSTY
THE SHIELD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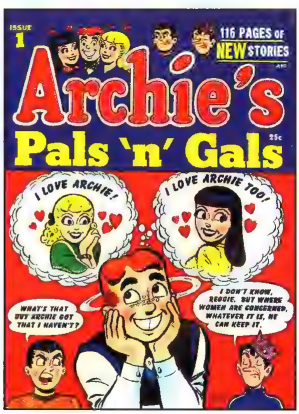
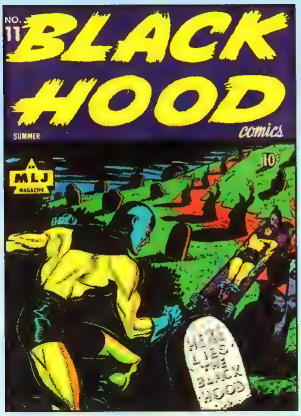
NEW ACTION CHAMP OF COMICS!


ISSUE 1
116 PAGES OF NEW STORIES
Archie's Pals 'n' Gals
I LOVE ARCHIE!
I LOVE ARCHIE TOO!
WHAT'S THAT BUT ARCHIE GOT THAT I HAVEN'T?
I DON'T KNOW, REGGIE, BUT WHERE WOMEN ARE CONCERNED, WHATEVER IT IS, HE CAN KEEP IT.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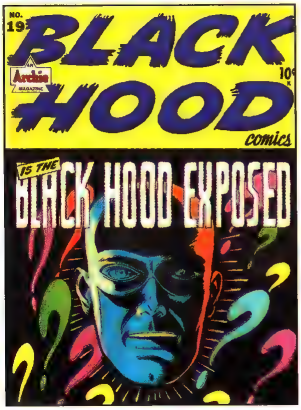
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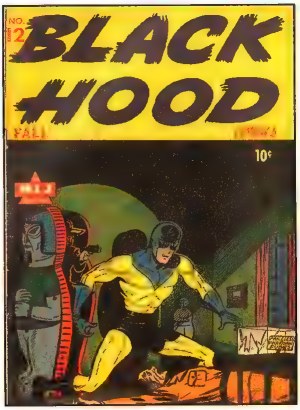
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*(Continued from page 36)*

Before the concept of The Pussycats came along, Josie was nothing more than an Archie clone, of which several were produced by the company, going as far back as the mid '40s to duplicate the original formula. If anything, *Josie,* which debuted in the early '60s was as bland and uneventful as they came. But that all changed when, in *Josie* #45 (December 1969), Josie and two friends, Melody who was part of the original cast, and Valerie, introduced in that issue formed an all-girl rock and roll band.

However, the real appeal of *Josie,* especially to male readers of the series occured in that very same issue when the girls first donned their legendary leopard print leotards, complete with ears and tails. No doubt harkening back to those Carnaby Street suits The Beatles wore when they first invaded America in the early '60s, those sassy catsuits went a long way in estasblishing the unique fashion style of Josie and the girls. Possibly, even being a prelude to the wildly bizarre outfits that would, in the '70s, become the trademark of KISS.

The expansion would also extend into rather small areas as well with the debut of the Archie digests. Going as far back as the '30s, digests were very popular with the reading public, so, Archie created the digest series which would feature reprinted stories from the '50s and '60s. This was a unique concept as it would allow Archie fans to read stories from decades past without having to spend huge sums of money on the original books. The digests became extremely popular with readers and remain so to this very day, with some 15 different titles being published.

But television would not be the only success for Archie as he and the gang became recording stars, of a sort. In 1968, thanks to studio musicians, The Archies made their debut in record stands with such hip and fun songs as "Archie's Theme," Truck Driver and Bang-Shang-A-Lang, as sung by lead vocalist Ron Dante. But the ultimate success of The Archies came in 1969 when Sugar Sugar hit number one on the billboard charts, becoming one of THE most popular songs of all time. Even to this day, you can hear Sugar Sugar on oldies stations from coast to coast!

The people at Archie headquarters saw what was happening and capitalized on the popularity of their characters on television and on the record charts by putting out two new books which would be direct tie-ins with same: *Everything's Archie* which, early on would focus mostly on stories featuring The Archies band (one story had them auditioning for Don Kirschner who produced the albums) and *Archie's TV Laugh-Out* where Archie would share center stage with Sabrina, at least until the teen witch graduated to her own regular comic a short time later.

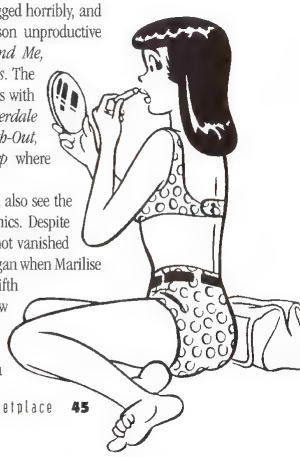
When the '70s began, Archie Comics were at their peak, producing, at one point, 18 regular titles, the line-up swelling to include *Betty and Me* (Betty's first solo title), *Archie At Riverdale High* (stories about the gang at school), *Reggie and Me* (a spin-off of the original Reggie title from the '50s) and separate joke books starring Reggie and Jughead. Add in close to a dozen different giant sized books (Betty and Veronica had four alone!), and three monthly books expanded to giant size (*Archie and Me, Betty and Me* and *Reggie and Me*), the company was very busy indeed!

It was also during the '70s when the country's social consciousness was expanding that Archie Comics recognized the need for racial diversity, to that end, they responded by adding minority characters to the cast. African-Americans were represented by Chuck Clayton who would become a close friend of Archie, especially in athletic endeavors at school, and his girlfriend Nancy Harris while Hispanic-Americans were represented by Frankie Valdez, a cocky, Latin version of Reggie and his girlfriend, Maria Rodriguez whose father was the school's vice-principal.

**Subliminal cheesecake, buxom blond PE instructors, and two-piece bathing suits were standard fare during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.**

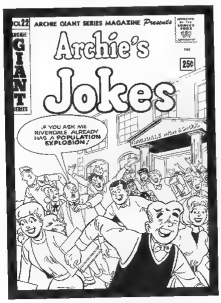
But, the '70s would end with the first major elimination of titles by Archie. As with publishers like Marvel and DC, comic book sales in the latter half of the decade sagged horribly, and the only way to stem the tide was to jettison unproductive books. At Archie, the ax fell on *Reggie and Me, Reggie's Wise Guy Jokes* and *Jughead's Jokes*. The subtraction would continue well into the '80s with the demise of *Archie and Me, Archie at Riverdale High, Archie's JokeBook, Archie's TV Laugh-Out, Josie, Laugh, Sabrina* and, ironically, *Pep* where Archie got his start in 1941.

To balance things out, the late '70s would also see the much heralded return of Katy Keene to comics. Despite being away for over fifteen years, Katy had not vanished from the public eye. In 1978, a Katy revival began when Marilise Flusser, a fashion coordinator for Saks Fifth Avenue enlarged Katy Keene covers for window display backgrounds for Saks fashions and the response was good. This led to renewed interest for Katy as, in 1979, Craig Leavitt a



California native launched a Katy Keene newsletter.

The newsletter ran for four years and featured the work of Katy's creator, Bill Woggon along with Barbara Rausch and John S. Lucas, Katy's number one fan. The grass roots rebirth of Katy, spurred on by Craig's newsletter and Katy themed conventions he sponsored paved the way for a brand new Katy comic



series. In 1983, the first *Katy Keene Special* hit the newsstands, featuring reprinted stories from the original series with cover art by Archie's main artist, Dan DeCarlo. Following three more reprint books, new stories followed in subsequent books.

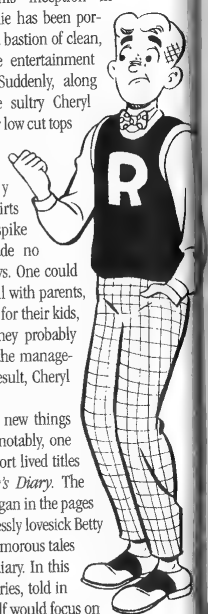
The new Katy series didn't really take off until John Lucas took over as the regular artist, and the book quickly soared to new heights. Just like in the original series, readers were encouraged to submit designs for Katy and her friends, and a brand new generation of fans around the world enjoyed being part of the creative process of the book with their designs. In addition to the comic book, there was a Katy Keene Fan Club with pens, notepads, buttons, plus t-shirts and sweatshirts, all of which had been designed by John.

The early '80s would see the arrival of far and away THE most controversial character ever seen in the long and storied history of Archie Comics: Cheryl Blossom. Cheryl, a buxom, saucy devil-may-care redhead with a blatant come hither personality made her infamous debut in *Betty and Veronica* #320 (August 1982) where, in a story called "Dare To Be Bare," Cheryl caused quite a stir on the beach when she proudly showed off a shockingly brief bikini that horrified even Veronica, then casually tried to go topless, only to be stopped by a panicked Betty!

Portrayed as a international jetsetter who was just as rich as Veronica, (if not more so), nowhere near as coy or demure as Betty and later, displaying a talent for deviousness that would put Reggie himself to shame, Cheryl, along with her smarmy twin brother Jason looked upon the population of Riverdale as beneath her notice, calling its residents townies and sought to make life miserable for them. Except for Archie whom Cheryl was absolutely crazy about, much to the outrage of Betty and Veronica as red hair on boys turned her on.

After only two years of entertaining stories that dealt with Cheryl and Jason causing trouble for the Riverdale High crowd, not to mention Cheryl's dogged pursuit of Archie, the Blossoms suddenly vanished from Archie series comics without a trace. While no official explanation was ever given for their disappearance (a regular practice at Archie when characters outlive their usefulness), one theory proposed by the author of this article was that Cheryl got the boot because she was too racy a character for the family oriented atmosphere of Archie Comics.

Since his inception in 1941, Archie has been portrayed as a bastion of clean, wholesome entertainment for kids. Suddenly, along comes the sultry Cheryl who in her low cut tops or tight sweaters, brazenly short skirts and spike heels made no secret of constantly lusting after boys. One could imagine this did not go over too well with parents, and since they either bought comics for their kids, or controlled what they bought, they probably made a boatload of complaints to the management of Archie Comics, and, as a result, Cheryl was sent packing.




The '80s would continue to see new things emerge from Archie Comics, most notably, one of the more memorable, though short lived titles the company ever produced: *Betty's Diary*. The original concept of *Betty's Diary* began in the pages of *Archie's JokeBook* with the hopelessly lovesick Betty relating rather exaggerated, and humorous tales of her exploits with Archie in her diary. In this version which debuted in 1986, stories, told in first person narrative by Betty herself would focus on the day to day events in her life as she truthfully related them in her diary.

The stories, written by the likes of Kathleen Webb, Frank Doyle and Rod Ollerenshaw were warm, funny, touching, thought provoking, occasionally heartrending, but always told with a down to earth realness that often eschewed the typically mindless slapstick approach of all the other Archie titles. Humor was not the primary goal of storytelling in *Betty's Diary*, the stories made you smile, and, they made you think

about life. Unfortunately, despite how well crafted the book had been, *Betty's Diary* was cancelled in early 1991.

Meanwhile, in 1987, Archie would return to television in a brand new animated series produced by DIC for NBC called The New Archies. In this series, Archie and the gang were portrayed not as full fledged teenagers, but as thirteen year olds at Riverdale Junior High. The dress and slang and fads employed by the kids were constant with the day, and while the stories were mildly amusing, even leading to a *New Archies* comic book, the show itself didn't have the staying power of the original Filmation series and only lasted until the end of the year.

The late '80s to early '90s would see a tremendous amount of turbulent times for Archie Comics. Turbulent in ways that would have lasting effects on Archie fans to this very day. As the last decade of the 20th century began, more titles were being purged, in addition to *Betty's Diary, Archie's Pals 'N' Gals, Everything's Archie, Katy Keene, Life With Archie* and *The New Archies* were cancelled, and the titles that took their place wildly varied in terms of quality. A few were somewhat entertaining while others were nothing short of wretched.

These new books would more or less take place outside the normal, everyday realm that has come to be known as the Archie Universe, and, in some cases, WAY beyond that particular realm. *Archie 3000* featured the gang in the 31st century, in *Archie's R/C Racers*, the gang, on separate teams race radio controlled cars, sponsored by competing companies across the country. Next came *Archie's Explorers of the Unknown* where Archie and company were troubleshooting adventurers in a hilarious tribute to DC's *Challengers of the Unknown*.

*Dilton's Strange Science* saw the diminutive genius in science fiction based stories like time travel, alien invaders and what not. *Faculty Funnies*, one the lesser lights had Mr. Weatherbee, Miss Grundy, Professor Flutesnoot and Coach Kleats as hapless superheroes, *Jughead's Time Police*, a semi-transparent take off on *Doctor Who* had Jughead as a guardian of time with Archie's 30th century descendant as his partner, *Veronica*, in her first ever solo title featuring stories set in foreign locales and, unquestionably, the worst of the lot, *Jughead's Diner.*

While these books might have been looked upon as being extremely innovative and imaginative, apparently they were not well received by Archie fans. At one point, Scott Fulop, the editor for this new line of books practically begged for letters from readers! However, his pleas fell on deaf ears as those books all fell victim to the ax, most of them never lasted more than five or six issues, *R/C Racers* ran for ten, and *Archie 3000* stretched to sixteen. By July of 1991, the only title that survived this third major purge was Veronica.

During this period, Archie would make has last foray onto television to date. In April of 1990, DIC produced a live action telemovie for NBC that would see Archie and the gang like they had never been seen before: AS ADULTS! In *Archie: To Riverdale And Back Again* (now out on video), Archie and company were thirtysomething adults, fifteen years removed from their graduation from Riverdale High and were coming home for a reunion. The concept of this movie was to combine the long-standing familiarity of Archie along with decidedly adult issues.

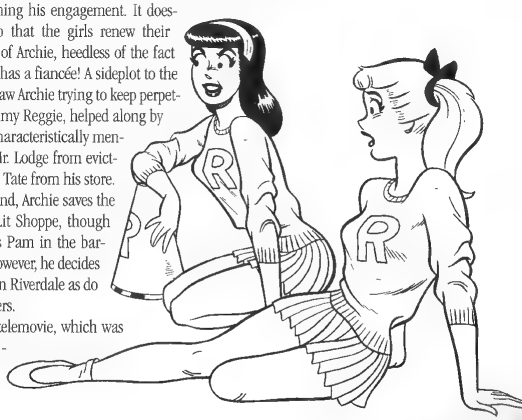
Case in point: Veronica, just as vampy as ever, having lived overseas in France since graduation was a four time loser at marriage; Jughead, a psychiatrist of all things was also a divorcé who carried emotional baggage that manifested itself

ARCHIE ANDREWS MAY BE "UP THE CREEK" BUT TONIGHT HE GETS THE PADDLE...THE OCCASION IS HIS INITIATION INTO RIVERDALE HIGH'S PHILOMATHIAN CLUB!
THIS ISN'T GOING TO HURT, IS IT FELLAS?
OH,NO!
WOO!
WHACK!
FOR PETE'S SAKE! HAVEN'T YOU INITIATED ME YET?
NOPE! THERE'S ONE MORE! COME ON, GANG, LET'S GO!

in a terrible fear of women while Betty, a gradeschool teacher was being bossed around by her crummy boyfriend, Robert. Moose and Midge had married, became chiropractors and had a son, and Archie, now a successful lawyer was getting ready to tie the knot with his fiancée, Pam and move out of Riverdale to the big city.

**Archie's writers addressed the serious topic of hazing in a humorous way... as the above panel illustrates.**

But when Archie sees Betty and Veronica for the first time in fifteen years, all his old feelings for them come flooding back, threatening his engagement. It doesn't help that the girls renew their pursuit of Archie, heedless of the fact that he has a fiancée! A sideplot to the movie saw Archie trying to keep perpetually slimy Reggie, helped along by an uncharacteristically menacing Mr. Lodge from evicting Pop Tate from his store. In the end, Archie saves the Chock'Lit Shoppe, though he loses Pam in the bargain, however, he decides to stay in Riverdale as do the others.



The telemovie, which was broadcast during

the May sweeps period was seen as a pilot for a possible series. Despite a pretty decent story and even better performances from the actors and actresses who portrayed the Archie characters, the movie finished a disappointing 51st in the Neilsen ratings, having been thrashed by the prime-time premiere of the Kevin Costner/Sean Connery remake of *The Untouchables* on CBS and the powerful one-two punch of *Married: With Children* and *In Living Color* (featuring the then unknown Jim Carrey) on FOX.

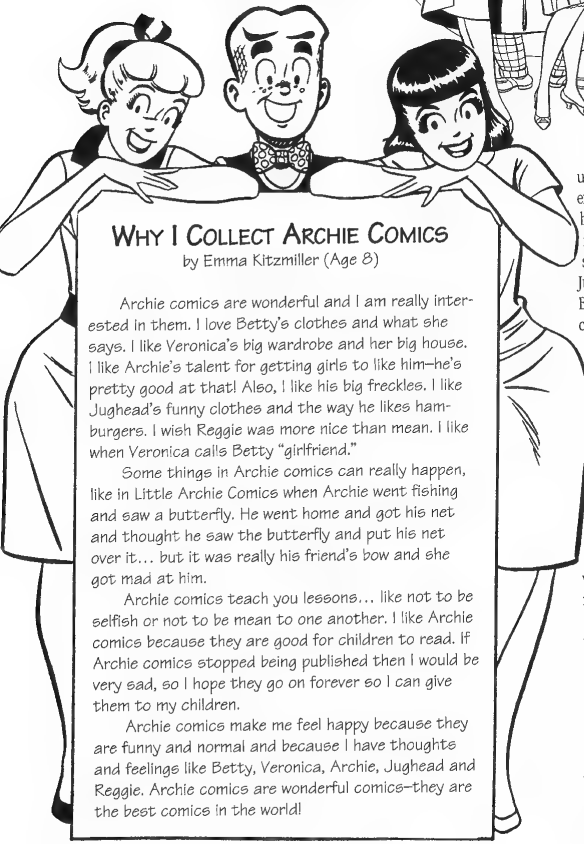
Considered by some to be a low point in the history of Archie Comics, mid-1991 saw the launch of continuing storylines, a là Marvel and DC. The magic of Archie was that one could pick up an Archie series comic at any time and enjoy it without having to worry about buying back issues in order to keep up to date with a particular storyline. But all that changed when a new editor was brought in to revamp *Jughead*, *Betty and Me*, and *Veronica*. It's no secret that many long-time Archie fans felt the results were disappointing.

The tenor of all three books had changed, and not necessarily for the better. In *Jughead*, he underwent a horrific change in appearance and attitude, gaining a mohawk and adopting the lifestyle of a skateboarding thrasher while gaining a new circle of friends who were even weirder than he was. Over in *Betty and Me*, Betty was employed by the local TV station in an internship program, running afoul of a jealous female anchorperson, while in Veronica's book, the globe-hopping theme had been scrapped in favor of stories set entirely in Riverdale.

With stories ranging from dull, to confusing to near unreadable, the new editorial policy tried to make those titles exactly like Marvel and DC books, tying plotlines from one book to another, including captions telling readers to see one issue or another and instituting letter columns with somewhat snappy names, i.e. Letter-Head for Jughead, Ponytail Express for Betty and Me & BillionAIRe Mail for Veronica. Also criticized by fans were the letter columns... where childish terms like "Smack dab kissable" actually saw print.

At the height of Archie's continuity experiment, a similar, but equally unpalatable experiment was conducted in *Betty and Veronica* #54 (August 1992) where the girls, throughout the entire book sported all sorts of different and unusual hairstyles, worlds apart from Betty's ponytail and Veronica's pageboy. Readers were then asked to select one of the unfamiliar hairstyles for what would be the girls' all new look in future issues. When the votes were tallied several months later, the consensus was to keep the girls' original hairstyles.

During late 1992, the influence of these "new wave" policies slowly lessened, the changes plainly evident in Jughead as he grew his hair back and resumed dressing and acting the way he always had. By early 1993, the exeriment had ended, and *Betty and Me* was



## Why I Collect Archie Comics

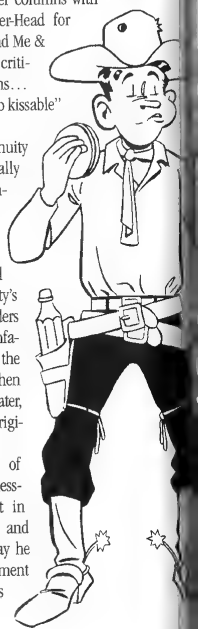
by Emma Kitzmiller (Age 8)

Archie comics are wonderful and I am really interested in them. I love Betty's clothes and what she says. I like Veronica's big wardrobe and her big house. I like Archie's talent for getting girls to like him–he's pretty good at that! Also, I like his big freckles. I like Jughead's funny clothes and the way he likes hamburgers. I wish Reggie was more nice than mean. I like when Veronica calls Betty "girlfriend."

Some things in Archie comics can really happen, like in Little Archie Comics when Archie went fishing and saw a butterfly. He went home and got his net and thought he saw the butterfly and put his net over it... but it was really his friend's bow and she got mad at him.

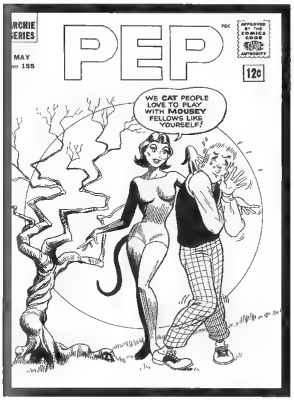
Archie comics teach you lessons... like not to be selfish or not to be mean to one another. I like Archie comics because they are good for children to read. If Archie comics stopped being published then I would be very sad, so I hope they go on forever so I can give them to my children.

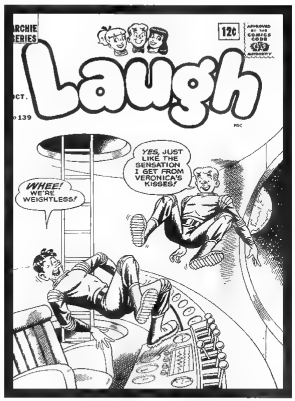
Archie comics make me feel happy because they are funny and normal and because I have thoughts and feelings like Betty, Veronica, Archie, Jughead and Reggie. Archie comics are wonderful comics–they are the best comics in the world!



laid to rest after 200 issues and then relaunched a month later as *Betty*. Apparently, the readers voiced their dislike of the "new Archie" which was reflected in poor sales on *Jughead, Betty and Me*, and *Veronica*.

Also in 1993, one of the most popular video game characters of the day gained a strong foothold in the comic book world, thanks to Archie: Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic, created in 1991 to be a mascot for Sega similar to Mickey Mouse being the mascot for Disney quickly became a celebrity in his own right, thanks to the video game which was widely played in arcades and at home on the Sega Genesis game system and later, the more advanced Sega Saturn. This notoriety led to not one, but two different animated television series.






Archie Comics jumped on the Sonic bandwagon when the company published an eight page Sonic sample issue. Written by Michael Gallagher and drawn by Scott Shaw!, this book was a free gift from Sega and was originally based on the syndicated cartoon series.

In August, a regular *Sonic* comic was launched which is still going strong today. Meanwhile, a new *Sonic* cartoon series debuted in September on ABC, displaying an action/adventure angle, the comic would soon follow the show's lead with stories based on the series.

In the years that followed, Archie Comics would engage in a series of crossovers where a major storyline would crossover into two or more books, i.e. "The Prom Tale" which saw Archie, Betty and Veronica in a serious tussle leading up to the prom, and "House Of Riverdale" where Archie and the gang found themselves caught up in one monster of a ghost story. But, the single biggest crossover epic Archie Comics had ever done was the now legendary "Love Showdown." The premise of this crossover was dirt simple: the end of the Eternal Triangle.

The madness began in *Archie* #429 (November 1994) when a lovesick Archie received a letter from a girl from his past who was returning to Riverdale. That alone got fans from coast to coast wondering just who the mystery woman could be. When Betty and Veronica get wind of the letter, but had no idea who the girl was as Archie refused to divulge her identity. The girls sever their friendship after being conned by Reggie who told Betty that Veronica wrote the letter to Archie and vice versa, each vowing to win him over once and for all!

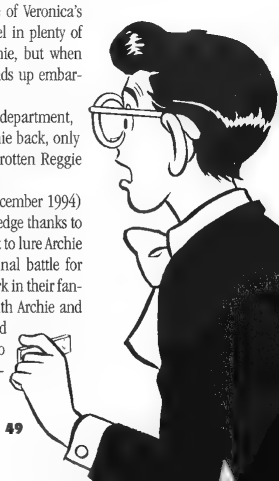
The first skirmish was in *Betty* #19 (November 1994) as Mr. Cooper, gives Betty tickets to the Lodge Foundation Summer Charity Dance. When Betty calls Archie to be his date, he explains that he is having problems with his car, Betty arranges to help repair his car if he'll be her escort to the dance. After Betty repairs Archie's car, Veronica winds up with Archie after the heiress tells her the tickets were for a different date. Later, Betty learns from Jughead that Veronica printed the tickets Mr. Cooper gave her. Furious at being duped, Betty vows to crash the dance!

The action continues in *Betty and Veronica* #82 (December 1994), Veronica is enjoying herself with Archie during a party at her house when Betty struts in wearing one of Veronica's hand-me-down dresses which she altered to reel in plenty of attention from every boy there, including Archie, but when Veronica tries to get the spotlight back, she winds up embarrassing herself.

With Betty having outfoxed her in the vamp department, Veronica tries her hand at cooking to win Archie back, only to fail there as well, despondent, she turns to rotten Reggie for help.

The concluding chapter in *Veronica* #39 (December 1994) begins with Veronica having regained her nasty edge thanks to Reggie's tutelage, and she wastes no time using it to lure Archie away from Betty. Outraged, Betty proposes a final battle for Archie: super soakers at high noon at Pickens Park in their fanciest outfits. The showdown in the park ends with Archie and the mystery girl–getting soaked by Betty and Veronica–Cheryl Blossom! Then, to add insult to injury, Archie, angry at the girls' childish behavior decides to be with Cheryl instead!

**Science fiction, mystery, and the macabre dominated the covers of many Archie titles during the monster boom of the late 1950s and 1960s.**



# Archie

The return of Cheryl Blossom to the Archie Universe was a shocker to Archie fans worldwide as she was perhaps the LAST person Archie fans ever expected to see again. Normally, when a character is eliminated from the Archie cast, and many have been over the decades, more often than not, he or she never comes back. One prevalent theory regarding Cheryl's return

was that a foil was needed to keep Archie from choosing between Betty and Veronica as part of the Love Showdown plot, to which end, Cheryl was rescued from oblivion by the editors to serve that purpose.

However, what the editors didn't foresee was the tremendous popularity Cheryl gained with Archie fans upon her return. Throughout 1995, Cheryl made guest appearances in virtually every Archie series comic, picking up where she left off in 1982: chasing after Archie and tormenting Betty and Veronica. That lead to four 48 page specials Cheryl starred in, containing new stories and reprints, followed in late 1995 and most of 1996 by a trio of entertaining three issue mini-series which would see Jason's return and the first ever appearance of Cheryl's parents.

With fans clamoring for more, their demands were met in early 1997 with the debut of a regular *Cheryl Blossom* comic. The tone of the comic had been set during the last mini-series where Cheryl went to great lengths to have a movie she made shown at an international film festival. This would lead to the running theme in Cheryl's new book of her neverending quest to be a celebrity, helped along when she and Jason inherited an inn from a deceased aunt and transform it into a posh resort called Club Blossom which Cheryl uses to entertain the rich and famous.

As it turned out, Cheryl Blossom wasn't the only character rescued from limbo to enjoy newfound popularity with a brand new generation of Archie fans. At 8 p.m., on April 7th, 1996, Easter Sunday, the Showtime cable channel premiered a prime-time made for TV movie aimed at kids, the movie was *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. Based almost entirely on the comic book series, the Sabrina movie featured in the starring role, Melissa Joan Hart, best known for fronting the hip and popular Nickelodeon series, *Clarissa Explains It All*.

The premise of the movie centered around Sabrina, sent to live with her aunts Hilda and Zelda in a new town, gaining magical powers on the eve of her sixteenth birthday and her struggle to fit in with her peers while adjusting to being a witch. Sabrina is helped along the way by Hilda and Zelda who were portrayed as attractive but extremely quirky women and Salem, a sleek black cat who just so happens to talk. The movie clicked on all levels, casting, acting and, of course the special effects. But the movie would only be the beginning of the Sabrina saga.

In May when ABC released its fall schedule, Sabrina was one of the new shows on the docket, joining the network's popular but sagging TGIF Friday night kiddie sitcom line-up, sandwiched between the long running *Family Matters* and a small screen version of the hit movie *Clueless*. The plot of the original 90 minute Showtime movie had been effectively condensed into a half hour premiere as Sabrina Spellman, sent to live with her nutty aunts by her warlock father (divorced from her mortal mother) gained magical powers on her sixteenth birthday.

Thanks to the enchanting presence of Melissa, Sabrina was given a wonderfully spunky and sassy personality, something the character never had in the comics as Sabrina was portrayed as a typically awkward teenager who just so happened to be a witch. Filled with delightfully off-beat humor and guest stars galore such as Penn and Teller, Robby Benson (Sabrina's dad), Brian Austin Green, Randy Travis, Kathy Ireland, Coolio and Raquel Welch, just to name a few, Sabrina attracted quite a following in her maiden season and became a sleeper hit.

Meanwhile, at Archie Headquarters, the editors, seeing how much of a success Sabrina had become produced a one-shot special in the latter half of 1996 with a cover featuring Sabrina, as drawn by longtime artist Dan DeCarlo next to Melissa as the live action version. This entertaining book length story recounted Sabrina's origin straight from the two TV pilots, but with one twist as Sabrina used her magic to transform Hilda and Zelda from the crones they had always been in the comics into the modern looking versions as seen on TV.

As Sabrina continued to gain in popularity, it eventually became the highest rated show in ABC's TGIF line-up, displacing *Family Matters* which jumped ship to CBS and will be opposite *Sabrina* this fall. Sabrina's success led the people at Archie to produce a regular *Sabrina* comic which debuted in early 1997 with a fun filled three issue story where Sabrina brought Cleopatra from ancient Egypt into the modern world and couldn't get her to go back. Lastly, in April of this year, Pocket Books came out with a series of Sabrina

young adult novels based on the TV show.

Beyond the realm of comic books, Archie, unlike any other comic book company has been at the forefront of educational and charitable relationships for years. In the early '90s, Archie Comics became the first comic book publisher to use soy inks and print their books with 100 percent recycled paper. The company received nationwide recognition for the efforts regarding the environment, leading to the creation of custom environmental comic books for the cities of San Diego and Chino which tied in with Earth Day.

Archie has also produced a variety of custom comics for such businesses and agencies as Radio Shack, Alcoholics Anonymous, the FBI and New York State. The cause of literacy in Mississippi led to the creation of a custom comic book for that state's school system, promoting the importance, and the fun of reading. In 1995, Archie Andrews was selected to be the official ambassador for the United Cerebral Palsy Association. As UCPA's spokesperson, Archie has made public appearances and donated comics to people afflicted with cerebral palsy and other disabilities.

Archie Comics created a series of public service announcements, for abstinence from smoking, missing children and AIDS education to name a few that have run in their comics at no cost to other publications. In 1996, Archie Comics participated in a promotion with Ore-Ida foods in an effort to raise more than $100,000 for UCPA. For every two and five pound package of Tater Tots and Onion Tater Tots purchased in March of that year, Ore-Ida donated two cents to UCPA while Archie donated twenty five cents for every comic book subscription they received.

The relationship of Archie and the military has been a long and fruitful one, when servicemen stationed overseas would spend their idle hours reading comic books sent to them from loved ones back home, and Archie seemed to be at the top of every soldier, sailor, airman and marine's list. From World War II to Operation Desert Storm (Aside: an Archie series comic from Spring 1991 dealt with the return of hometown servicemen and women to Riverdale from Iraq in an excellent book length story), this relationship has not changed.

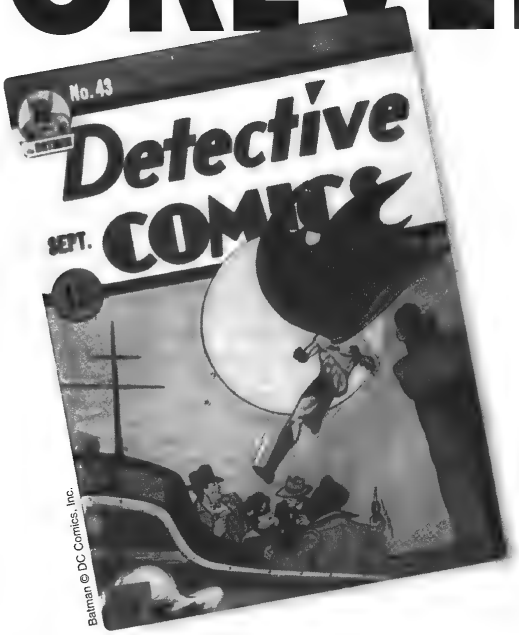
During the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, Archie and the gang brightened the grim existence of American troops stationed in that war torn country. Acting on a request from Supply Sgt. Edwin Rodriguez of the HHC 16th Engr. Battalion, Michael Silberkleit, chairman and co-publisher of Archie Comics arranged to have more than five hundred assorted Archie comics sent to Sgt. Rodriguez to disperse to the troops. Reading the timeless, fun filled adventures of Archie and company was a warm and pleasant reminder of home to the men and women serving abroad.

The big news regarding Archie is the launch of the official Archie Comics website. The website will feature areas devoted to Archie & Friends, Sabrina, Cheryl Blossom, Josie and the Pussycats (rumored to be in line for a live action treatment, thanks to the popularity of The Spice Girls) and Katy Keene. Along with news and reviews on upcoming Archie series comics, games, contests, advice columns, fan art and more, there will also be an internet based multi-part story starring Archie and the gang and The Web, one of the company's first super-heroes.

Enjoyed by 1.25 million readers every month and recognized by an astonishing ninety-eight percent of surveyed teens and adults, Archie has had a powerful influence on mainstream entertainment. Revolving around themes similiar to those established by Archie Comics, there's *Happy Days* (was it a coincidence that Richie Cunningham, the lovable lead character was a redhead?), not to mention shows that centered around kids in high school settings such as *The Wonder Years, Saved By The Bell* and *Beverly Hills 90210*.

Even after more than 50 years, Archie and his friends remain a key part of American pop folklore. Despite the rampant changes that have occurred in the comic book industry, Archie remains a pleasant and refreshing constant amidst all the chaos and turmoil. It's very good to know that Archie and his gang will be around to entertain young and old alike, well into the next millennium. The times, fads and fashions may change, but the down home values that make Archie great never will. When all is said and done, it's quite true that–EVERYTHING'S ARCHIE! ■

# BATMAN. FOREVER.

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Continued from CBM #51 page 61

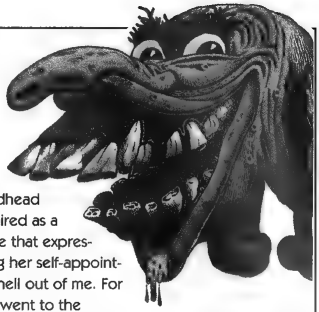
# Chapter Six: Testament Of Wonder

The following eleven pieces wrap up our series on the "Living Legend," Julie Schwartz, with testimonials and tidbits from his friends, fans, and fellow creators. Of course the greatest testimonial for Julie is the sense of wonder that readers, old and new, feel when reading the Silver Age exploits of Flash and Green Lantern and the Justice League, or the two towering titles of four-color science fiction that Julie gave us in *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space*, or any of the other titles that he edited in over four decades of work for DC.

Now, starting with a charming reminiscence by Julie himself, here's what "they" have to say about the Schwartz...

## Lena the Hyena: A Love Story

by Julius Schwartz



FIRST PUBLISHED IN COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE #386

In 1945, a gorgeous redhead named Jean Ordwein was hired as a "Girl Friday" (do they still use that expression?) by DC Comics. Among her self-appointed duties was to tease the hell out of me. For example, she noticed that I went to the "Superman Room" every hour on the hour... so she always made an exasperated look at her wristwatch as I passed by her desk. (What she didn't know is that I deliberately made my hourly passbys to get a close-up look at her!)

Knowing that I couldn't concentrate on working if there was a distracting object within my range of vision, Jean would scatter bits of paper on the floor whenever I was out of the room. On one occasion, Jean Scotch-taped to my desk the prize-winning drawing of Lena the Hyena with the inscription: "The future Mrs. Schwartz!" (Lena was created by Al Capp and Basil Wolverton.) Little did Miss Jean Ordwein dream that on November 24, 1948, she would become Mrs. Julius Schwartz!

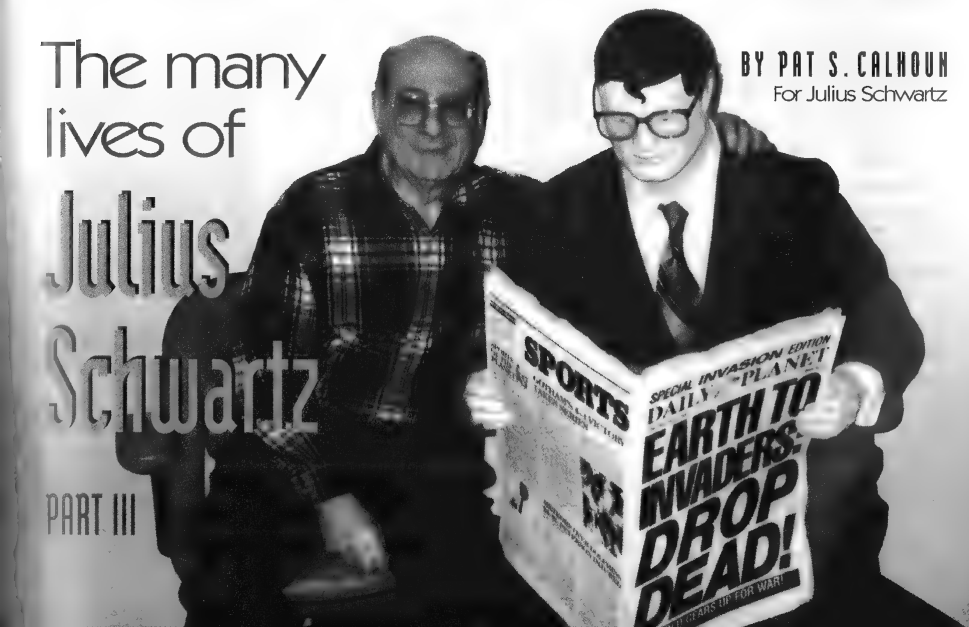
Herewith, a photo of Jean with me on the right and John Broome on the left. John was not only my best writer during the Silver Age of comics, he was also best man at my wedding!

ALL CHARACTERS, LOGOS' COVERS, & TITLES © 1997 DC

# The many lives of Julius Schwartz

PART III

BY PAT S. CALHOUN
For Julius Schwartz



# The Editorial Machine! by Paul Levitz

Julie Schwartz's role in the history of comics and science fiction is a well documented legend, and I'll leave it to others to provide commentary on both the public Julie and his incredible body of creative work. Permit me, instead, to confine my comments to what happened behind the scenes.

In a field where creativity often equates with chaos, Julie sought perfection in the editorial process, not simply the end product. Watching him work was watching the standard be set for editorial efficiency and professionalism. It's not a coincidence that the classic Schwartz series kept their creative teams intact for record-setting periods; it was Julie's dedication to ensuring that the next script be ready for the artist so neither time was lost nor the artist's income diminished.

Many talented people came and went over Julie's years, but I remember none who left feeling ill-treated by him. This was all matched by an obsession with fulfilling the minutia of the role: lettercols, proofreading, record keeping, vouchering, and all forms of follow-up. All done within smoothly normal office hours, without interruption of his lunch hour bridge game, and seemingly with perfect ease.

The standard set by Julie has not been approached, much less achieved, by any of us who have succeeded him. Perhaps we pursue the result too much over the process, where he felt the perfect process would provide the best opportunity for the best result. All I know is, I only began to see past my awe of this impeccable editorial machine when I wandered past his door during one of his three carefully scheduled daily calls to his beloved Jean, and his voice softened into distinctly non-editorial tones.

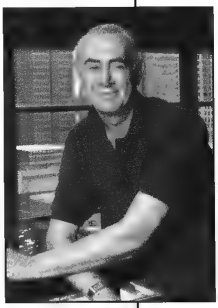
I learned a lot from Julie, but the only royalties I ever paid him were for stealing his best trick — marrying the prettiest girl in the office.

*Paul Levitz is the Executive Vice President and Publisher of DC Comics, and, in addition to all the business acumen that entails, he has the heart of a fan.*

**The reincarnation of Green Lantern in the Silver Age, shown here in his debut, was one of the key Julie Schwartz/ Gil Kane creations (Showcase #22, Oct 1959).**

# Schwartz! by Gil Kane

Julie was the father of DC's new line of superheroes. His editorial personality was stamped on every one of those books. Julie was also the most dependable of any editor I ever worked for. A good man in a hard time.



GIL KANE PHOTO BY BETH GWINN

*Gil Kane entered the comics field as a teenager in the early 1940s and has graced the field since, developing into one of the seminal DC artists of the Silver Age with notable work on Green Lantern and the Atom. And after that he kept growing, drawing newspaper strips and graphic novels and doing work for Marvel of memorable grace and power. Gil is also a profoundly knowledgeable critic and historian of the comics medium and continues to thrill fans and readers with projects like 1993's adaptation of* Jurassic Park *for Topps Comics.*

# I Am Not Snapper Carr!

by Mark Evanier

Calling Julie Schwartz the best editor in the history of comics is probably faint praise – like singling out Shemp as the most dignified of the Stooges. The job has not always summoned forth the Best and the Brightest, and many of those we respect, we respect more for what they did besides editing – their work as writers and/or artists. Schwartz is among the few to distinguish himself in the "editor only" category. (To those who don't know what good editing entails, you're in good company. I'm not certain I do, and many who've held the office sure haven't. But whatever an editor does, Julie did it better than anyone else.)

I don't know quite when I first noticed that most of my favorite DC titles had him in common. I knew they were a bit more sharply-plotted than most, and a bit more likely to presume some smarts on the part of the consumer. But when I noticed that they all said, "Julius Schwartz, Editor" in 2-point type at the bottom of page one, I dunno.

Maybe it was around the time he took command of the Batman titles and achieved a total revamp/resurrection of a character who had grown silly and strangely-interplanetary in other hands.

Or maybe it was when I finally amassed the first dozen or so issues of *Justice League Of America* and decided it was my favorite "team" book, which it remains to this day. Or maybe *Flash* or *Mystery In Space* or *Green Lantern* or... Whenever, whatever, Schwartz knew how to assemble the best, and get the best out of them. I guess that's what a good editor does.

And he has been a pivotal figure in comic book (and science-fiction) history. In these, his retirement years, he has been an endless source of info and anecdote for those of us who obsess on funnybook heritage.

About the only thing Julie hasn't done well is to keep up this ridiculous pretense of being in his eighties. People, he's twenty-six if he's a day...maybe twenty-seven, tops. Just look at him at a convention, running about, partying 'til dawn, squiring around the most fabulous babe on the premises. If that's an old guy, I'm Snapper Carr. Someplace, this man must have a portrait of himself that's aging continually... and I'll bet it was drawn by Sid Greene.

When I wrote an umpteen-part series on Julie for *CBG*, no one complained it was too long – not even Stan Lee, who noted it was a full installment longer than my treatise on him. Everyone wanted to know more about Schwartz the Living Legend, and it's terrific that *CBM* is satiating that need. This way, I can learn more about Julie without having to listen to him and get all wet. You see, he tends to spit when he talks...

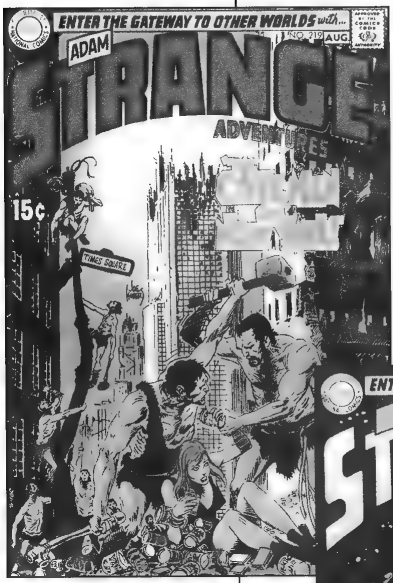
*Mark Evanier is a comic book reader, writer, columnist, personality, collector, historian, spokesperson, and enthusiast. For many years he narrated the misadventures of the hilariously dim barbarian, Groo, working with the "mad" magician, Sergio Aragones.*

ART BY SERGIO ARAGONES

**Snapper Carr uses an early form of "digital communication" in this panel from Brave & Bold #28 (Mar 1960) drawn by Mike Sekowsky.**

# Joe Kubert and Schwartz's Sci Fi!

Joe Kubert is one of the great "second generation" comic book artists, who were kids learning to draw when guys like Will Eisner and Lou Fine first started strutting their stuff. In fact Joe became part of Eisner's staff while still a teenager. He drew Hawkman in Flash Comics in the late 1940s, and in the early 1950s created a great caveman comic character, Tor (published by St. John). Joe also, in collaboration with long-time pal and partner Norman Maurer, invented the "3-D" comic book process. Later in the 1950s, he became star artist on DC's war titles, and in the early 1960s took another turn at Hawkman. In the 1970s he spearheaded DC's Burroughs-licensed titles, himself drawing a notable version of Tarzan. Joe founded a successful art school for cartoonists, and recently Joe has seen his sons, Adam and Andy, become accomplished artists. Joe is still actively drawing as well; last year saw his graphic novel Fax From Sarajevo, a diary of contemporary life in war-torn Eastern Europe.




The Kubert covers shown here hail from 1969 when *Strange Adventures* was devoting itself to reprints of classic early Silver Schwartz Sci Fi. *SA*# 219's cover (Aug 1969) features Kubert's fantastic visual interpretation of the great Atomic Knights tale, "The Cavemen of New York," that first appeared in *Strange Adventures* #120 in 1960 and is reprinted inside. This issue also contains the Adam Strange yarn from *Mystery in Space* #53–his first appearance there–from 1959 and reprints an episode of Schwartz's Space Cabby. *SA* #220 (Oct 1969) is Kubert's reprise of the wonderful "gray tone" Adam Strange cover to *Mystery in Space* #55 from 1959. Inside is "The Beast From the Runaway World" and the third Atomic Knights story, "The Lost City of Los Angeles." With the awesome combination of the Atomic Knights and Adam Strange, and a couple of knockout covers by Joe Kubert, these two reprint issues rank as some of the purest distillations of Schwartz SF and are highly prized by Bronze Age collectors.

# Julie Schwartz & the Flowering of Comics Fandom!

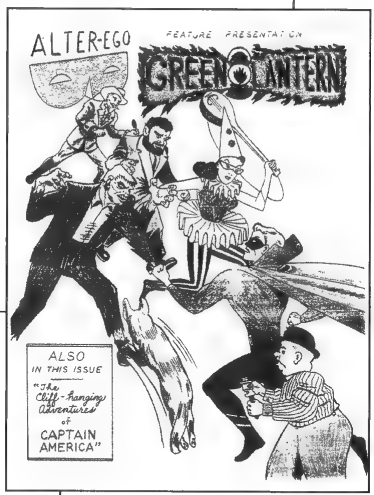
## by Jerry Bails

Comics fans today and forevermore need to understand just how much we owe Julie Schwartz for the very existence of our beloved hobby. Julie prepared the soil, planted the seeds, and watered the garden. When I published Alter-Ego in March of 1961, I just happened to be one of the first seedlings to pop from the ground. The garden would have flourished whether or not I or my co-editor, Roy Thomas, had even been there. The proof is in how quickly the garden was filled with fannish projects by people from all over the world. The first Who's Who of Comics Fandom, which I published in 1964, contains a record of these fannish events and clearly documents that the fanac of Bails and Thomas was but a minuscule aspect of the burgeoning Comics Fandom.

Someone had to know how to prepare the soil, when and what to plant, and how to bring sunlight, water, and nutrients in at the right times. That someone was Julie Schwartz. He was the gardener behind all this creativity. It was his dedication, generosity, creative guidance, and toil that brought into being an organized Comics Fandom and a whole new generation of creative people.

Fannish exchanges actually started before the appearance of *Alter-Ego*. Many of these occurred as a result of Julie's mentioning in one of his letter columns that I had a complete collection of the legendary *All-Star Comics*. Since Julie was thoughtful enough to print the home addresses of letter writers, I was contacted by fans from places as distant as Australia, South Africa and the Northwest Territories–not to mention practically every state in the Union. In the weeks following the publication of one of my letters in the *Justice League of America* or *Brave & Bold*, I would receive scores of inquiries about the Golden Age of comic books. I had some REALLY BIG mail-days. In those times before e-mail, I had to answer all of that mail by hand –one-by-one. That's primarily the reason I rather quickly decided to create a fan newsletter or magazine to respond to all those inquiries. (It wasn't until I met Julie that I began calling it a fanzine.)

*(Continued on page 58)*




**Alter Ego #3 (Fall 1961) offered coverage of the Golden Age Green Lantern by Jerry Bails and the Silver GL by Roy Thomas. Also included was an article on the Captain America movie serial by Ron Haydock. This was the last issue to be published by the ditto process.**

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# Carmine and Julie's Characters

## by Carmine Infantino

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GRODD, SHOW SOME RESPECT--
--AND PUT THE BANANA DOWN!

**Carmine Infantino drew this self-portrait surrounded by characters that he worked on with Julie Schwartz: Adam Strange, the Golden Age Flash, Grodd the Super Gorilla, the Silver Age Flash, and Batman. This charming tribute ran as the cover to The Amazing World of DC #8 (Sep 1975).**

In late 1960, I posed the idea of a fan publication to my regular pen-pal of several years, Roy Thomas. He jumped on the idea. Suggestions for features began to fly back and forth between us. As it happened, I had a job interview that was to take me to Long Island in December. That trip gave me the opportunity to meet for the first time with Julie Schwartz and Gardner Fox, two men with whom I had corresponded for years. At that first meeting, I recall that they took me to lunch after showing ME off in the DC offices. I was made to feel that they were as proud of me as an older fan of 27 (and a young college professor) as they were proud to show me their creative environs. Believe me, that was a heady feeling for a fan of over 20 years, and it quadrupled my motivation to create a magazine for comics fans.

When I mentioned to Julie our plans for a fan magazine, he introduced me to Xero, the science fiction fanzine, the very first fanzine that I ever saw. He hinted about his own involvement in the creation of S-F Fandom in the 1930s. However, I was not into science fiction. I'm afraid I was more interested at the time in the possibilities of a COMICS fandom. Although I had dabbled as a kid in amateur publishing with a little toy printing press, I knew almost next to nothing about putting out a real fanzine. Any kind of success that first issue of Alter-Ego had was due, in very large measure, to what I learned about the comics business and fanac from Julie and Gardner.

Until I started my career as a dedicated faned (short for fan-editor), I was unaware of the existence of price lists for old comics that a few dealers were circulating through the mails. Very early on, I began to receive listings from Claude Held, Bill Thailing, and possibly other mail-order dealers. Alter-Ego carried ads for these dealers. Within that first year of publication, the demand for classified ads by dealers and collectors was so great that I pulled the ad section out of Alter-Ego to create the separate fanzine, The Comicollector.

Julie and Gardner were supplying me with a constant flow of news about upcoming events in the comics. I loved carrying advance news of upcoming stories- something no one had done before. Unfortunately, it was taking me some months to put together the kind of articles I wanted to run in Alter-Ego, during which time the news was going stale. I decided once again to change the all-inclusive character of my initial concept of a

fanzine. I pulled out the news segment (then called "On the Drawing Board") and created a separate news-zine that, after a few issues, became The Comic Reader.

As with all my fanzines inspired or encouraged by Julie, it was always my intention to show what could be done and find others more talented or committed to specific projects to carry the ball. Others took over all three of my first fanzines and carried them to greater heights. The publishers were talented people like Roy Thomas, Biljo White, Ronn Foss, "Grass" Green, G. B. Love, Glen Johnson and Paul Levitz. (The latter eventually became the publisher of DC Comics.) Every one of us early faneds owe Julie Schwartz a debt of gratitude for inspiration, help, and guidance along the way.

Julie was the first to tell me about S-F conventions. Being no dummy, I could see what Julie was driving at. Comics Fandom HAD to have a convention of its own. At a fan gathering in my home in 1963, the so-called Alley Tally, a group of about 20 Great Lakes-area fans discussed the possibilities of a comics convention. Just months later, I joined Shel Dorf and other Detroiters in putting on the first convention truly dedicated to comics and its sister arts. That was 1964, but this was decades after Julie and his friends had done the same thing for science fiction fandom. At my suggestion, the Detroit convention of 1965 was re-named "The Detroit Triple Fan Fair" (highlighting comics, fantasy films, and prose). It was a VERY successful event, but that was about the extent of my contribution to the convention scene. The really creative energy and genius of Shel Dorf carried the ball forward when he moved to San Diego and created the most successful comics convention ever seen on this side of the Atlantic. Shel will tell you of the many influences on his career as a fan and professional letterer. One of these was Julie Schwartz.

As a fan in those days, I was following the example of my mentor whenever I received packages containing samples of the creative efforts of my correspondents. I learned from Julie to show respect, consideration, and encouragement to every eager young talent. I was honored and thrilled to see the early creations of those (younger than myself) who would go on to become famous creators. I received scores of amateur strips from aspiring artists and writers. One of these youngsters–who I hope I encouraged–told creative stories using "clothes-pin" figures in a comic book narrative. He was certainly no artist, but, boy, did he have an imagination, and he could write! I called him, affectionately, "Baby" Steve Gerber. He went on to become the creator of Howard the Duck and many other unique contributions to the medium. From day one, it was clear that Steve was a talent to be reckoned with.

Steve was only one of many who saw Comics Fandom as the opening to a career in comics. I was proud and honored to showcase young Rich Buckler's art on the cover of my Collector's Guide to the First Heroic Age (1969) and to accompany him later on a jaunt to the DC offices where he received his first serious art appraisal from the one and only Neal Adams.

Let me not forget to mention other noteworthy talents that Julie inspired. There was my ol' pen pal from Missouri, Roy Thomas (who was a young high school teacher at the time) and a lad from Michigan (one of many) named Mike Vosburg. Both Roy and Mike were bursting to get into comics. They were among dozens of new talents that would enter the comics field successfully. Many of them were from the midwest. A decade earlier, their lack of proximity to New York City would have doomed their career aspirations. (I know; I was one of the wannabes of the mid-1950s.) Every single one of the talented newcomers to the industry whose hometowns were beyond commuter distance to the Big Apple owes Julie a big debt of gratitude for opening up the new bridge to the pro world. (Ah, if I had only been ten years younger myself...)

Julie Schwartz, as much as any one person, is responsible for the new blood that entered the comics field from about the mid-1960s onward. Ask Mike Friedrich, Marv Wolfman, Bill Spicer, Tony Isabella, Mark Evanier, Len Wein, Don Rosa, Don Glut, Grass Green, or John Byrne. They all owe him for their entry into the field because Julie had the vision and the heart to see the important role that fans would play in furthering the field of comics.

**Gardner Fox as drawn by Gil Kane.**

May I presume to make a suggestion of a way in which we can all honor the gardener who helped to cultivate our luscious botanical wonderland? In the name of Julie Schwartz, we could invite acquaintances of all ages (boys, girls, men, and women alike) to join us in our lifelong enjoyment of America's most underrated but still the most potentially accessible, delightful, and participatory story-telling medium since people first began telling stories around campfires. Recommend good comics. There is something out there for everyone–thanks, in large measure, to the "Horticulturist Deluxe", Julie Schwartz.

Thanks a million, Julie!

*Jerry Bails has been an important contributor to comics fandom since the early 1960s. His magnum opus is his comics* Who's Who *(see page 57).*

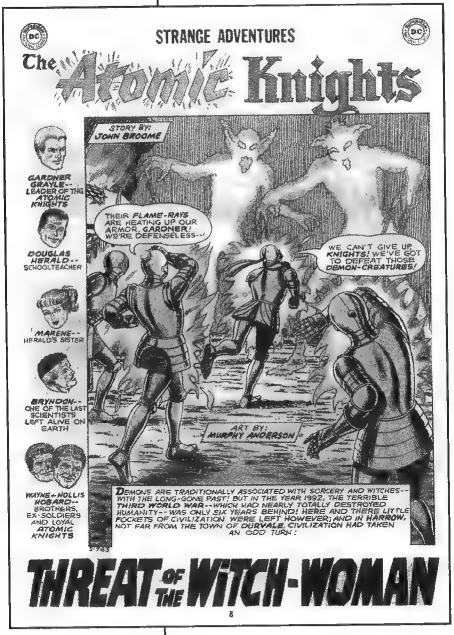
# Gilding the Lily! by Murphy Anderson

You want a testimonial to Julie? From me???
First, let's dissect the word to see if it "fits" Julius Schwartz. (Keep in mind I'm from the North Carolina Mountains.)

tes-ti-mon-ial (testy-moan-y'all)

TESTY: Yes, he was at times–but he usually was of good cheer.

MOAN: Occasionally he elicited some–from a certain few artists (almost never a writer) while administering an appropriate tongue lashing. Why? For their tardiness in work delivery... especially when the tardiness was habitual. No, I'll mention no names, but he obviously must have liked them and their work enough to not have fired them.


STRANGE ADVENTURES
The Atomic Knights
STORY BY: JOHN BROOME
GARDNER GRAYLE--LEADER OF THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS
DOUGLAS HERALD--SCHOOLTEACHER
MARENE--HERALD'S SISTER
BRYNDON--ONE OF THE LAST SCIENTISTS LEFT ALIVE ON EARTH
WAYNE-HOLLIS HOBARD--BROTHERS, EX-SOLDIERS AND LOYAL ATOMIC KNIGHTS
THEIR FLAME-RAYS ARE HEATING UP OUR ARMOR, GARDNER! WE'RE DEFENSELESS--!
WE CAN'T GIVE UP, KNIGHTS! WE'VE GOT TO DEFEAT THOSE DEMON-CREATURES!
ART BY: MURPHY ANDERSON
DEMONS ARE TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH SORCERY AND WITCHES--WITH THE LONG-GONE PAST! BUT IN THE YEAR 1992, THE TERRIBLE THIRD WORLD WAR--WHICH HAD NEARLY TOTALLY DESTROYED HUMANITY--WAS ONLY SIX YEARS BEHIND! HERE AND THERE LITTLE POCKETS OF CIVILIZATION WERE LEFT HOWEVER; AND IN NARROW, NOT FAR FROM THE TOWN OF DUBVALE, CIVILIZATION HAD TAKEN AN 'OOZ' TURN!
THREAT OF THE WITCH-WOMAN
8

Y'ALL: Nope!!! He is, after all, a Bronx lad through and through. But I'll keep working on him. I've not given up–yet!

BINGO! It definitely is a term that can be associated with Julie.

In addition to his consummate professionalism, Julie's gruff manner belies his warmness and fairness to one and all.

Once Julie took on a writer or artist "full-time", he invariably would have the next assignment ready and waiting when the current assignment was delivered. Also ready and waiting, miracle of miracles, would be the check in payment. It was also not unknown, when a dire need arose, for Julie to advance payment before actual delivery of the work.

Julie was tops as an editor–but he was much more with writers and artists in the arena of ideas. Creatively, he was truly a collaborator. Seldom did a writer submit a plot or story idea that survived intact, and equally seldom did an artist make a cover proposal that was not bettered or completely changed.

In Julie's opinion a potential purchaser should be intrigued by a cover scene–and unable to resist buying the magazine because of the attraction of powerful ideas depicted.

On interior pages as well as covers, an artist was never told how to compose his drawings, but Julie demanded that it be immediately clear and apparent to him what was happening. If he could not understand it, neither, he reasoned, could a reader.

Many covers were produced with no story line in mind. Julie and his writer would then plot a story which incorporated the cover scene... a device he brought along to comics from his pulp magazine days. In the process, characters delineated on those covers often generated new villains and heroes–many of whom are still employed in today's comics.

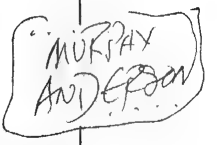
During the almost 47 years I've known Julie, he has changed but little–even physically. From those who've known him longer and from the evidence of old photos, I gather he has been virtually the same since his early science-fiction pulp days–except for his trademark bald pate. His association with the comic book industry must have caused him to pull out his hair.

Julie's stature in both comics and science-fiction is shown whenever he appears at S-F or comic conventions and should be testimonial enough... forget about the accolades he receives when he attends a PULP convention. ▶

Which makes me wonder why I am writing this! Methinks one of my tasks in life must be to try to "Gild the lily". Was it someone named Jake Spear that intoned some such phrase?

'Nuff said!

*Murphy Anderson began drawing comics for Fiction House's* Planet Comics *in the mid-1940s where he illustrated features like Life on Other Worlds and Star Pirate. He won the job of drawing the Buck Rogers newspaper strip in 1947. Murphy has always had a special affinity for science fiction–a taste acquired by ingesting many of the SF pulps of the late '30s and early '40's.*




*Murphy started working for Julie on* Mystery In Space *and* Strange Adventures *in 1951 and produced an excellent run of Captain Comet covers for the latter title. Murphy continued to work on Julie's SF mags and in 1960 began illustrating the Atomic Knights in* Strange Adventures, *one of the high-water-mark series of Silver SF. In 1964 he began drawing Hawkman, starting with issue #1. The covers of the early Hawkman issues are spectacular.*

*Murphy also did a lot of first-rate inking for DC over pencils by Gil Kane, Mike Sekowsky, Curt Swan, and Carmine Infantino.*

*Recently Murphy produced some marvelous re-creations of covers originally drawn by his childhood hero Lou Fine. Murphy also re-created one of his Strange Adventures sci-fi epics shown on the cover of* CBM *#50!*

## Jewel-y Schwartz! by Forry Ackerman

Twenty hours ago I got up in a city of 12 million Chinese–Beijing–and now, home, with a numb behind, and having riffled through 152 pieces of mail, my first official act is to rush out this piece for you, Julie.

In Cheng-du (pop. 10 million) I spent time with 2 astronauts and 3 Russian Cosmonauts and 4 sci-fi pros. The bachelors amongst us all lost our hearts to Lily Jasmine, I'm sure the most charismatic girl amongst the 1 billion 200 million Chinese. Where were you when we needed you, Julie? We all lost out to a Russian general. I'll bet you a dollar to a dough-naut that sexy Schwartz would have captured her for the American contingency and at least would have shared her with me for a meal or two.

Did I say meal?–gourmet banquets night and noon. A minimum of 5 soups (top of 7), a minimum of 22 courses (the max–37!!!). I'm sure you would have relished small eels, orioles' eggs, black chicken, coconut milk, monkey balls, spiced bamboo, tongues, and other Oriental delicacies. (The last night of all, when I was all by myself, I walked a mile through the streets of downtown Beijing to have a feast fit for a king that I would gladly have treated you to, Julie: a hamburger, French fries, hot apple tart, coffee, and an ice cream cone–at McDonalds!!!)

PHOTO BY JOHN L. COKER III

Sorry this seems to be more about me than you, Julie, but I'm still under the spell of China and participating there in the 1997 Beijing International Science Fiction Conference. Delegates were there from Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, and Russia. If you'd been there, Julie, we could have TIPPED THEM TO TTT!

You're invited as a Guest of Honor to my 100th birthday–but please leave me at least one girl to sit on my lap in my wheelchair!

Your friend to the end... Forry

*Forrest J. Ackerman has been a science fiction fan since the early 1930s. He was "scientifilm" editor for* The Time Traveller (TTT), *starting in 1932, and an organizer for the first World Science Fiction Convention in 1939. He also coined the term sci-fi.*

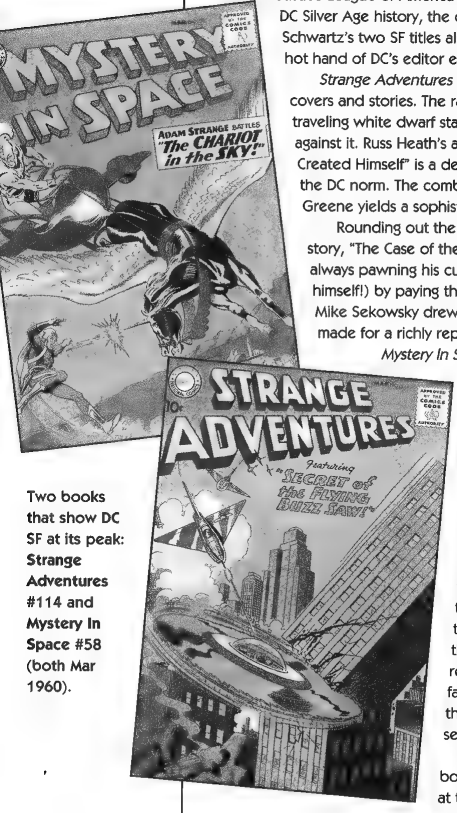
*Forry continued his homage to his home town of Hollyweird by editing* Famous Monsters of Filmland *(begun in 1958), a well-remembered mag that did a lot to introduce fans of the monster movies to the larger world of SF fandom. And Forry's house, the "Ackermansion," has become a museum containing the greatest sci-fi collection in the universe!*

# Pinnacle of Wonder!

By Pat S. Calhoun

Flash's jump-starting of the Silver Age in *Showcase* #4 (Sep-Oct 1956) was actually a protracted process that took two and a half years to win his own title with *Flash* #105 (Mar 1959). But by then the pace had quickened; DC SF was exploding: the first Rip Hunter Time Master appeared in *Showcase* #20 in June, Adam Strange and Space Ranger took over (respectively) *Mystery In Space* and *Unexpected* in August, Green Lantern blazed into being in *Showcase* #22 in October, and its worth mentioning that Atlas-Marvel was back on their feet with four fine fantasy mags which surely spurred DC's efforts.

The DC universe took a quantum leap with the Julie Schwartz-spearheaded introduction of the Justice League of America in *Brave & Bold* #28 (Mar 1960). This marked a peak moment in DC Silver Age history, the critical mass of all that creativity. It's no coincidence that Schwartz's two SF titles also registered phenomenal entries that month, produced by the hot hand of DC's editor extraordinaire.


MYSTERY IN SPACE
ADAM STRANGE BATTLES "The CHARIOT in the SKY!"
STRANGE ADVENTURES
featuring "SECRET of the FLYING BUZZ SAW!"

**Two books that show DC SF at its peak: Strange Adventures #114 and Mystery In Space #58 (both Mar 1960).**

*Strange Adventures* #114's "Secret of the Flying Buzz Saw" ranks as one of the great covers and stories. The raw wonder of the cover is fully matched by an intricate tale of a traveling white dwarf star that imperils Earth and of the aliens who have come to help us against it. Russ Heath's art is one of the most breathtaking jobs of the era. "The Man Who Created Himself" is a deeply-realized time travel yarn that's slightly more bittersweet than the DC norm. The combination of a dazzling plot and smoothly-detailed drawing by Sid Greene yields a sophisticated SF masterpiece.

Rounding out the ish is a lighter-weight but thoroughly enjoyable Star Hawkins story, "The Case of the Martian Witness." Star Hawkins was a future detective who was always pawning his cute robot secretary, Ilda, early in the tale and redeeming her (and himself!) by paying the broker back with reward money or client's fees at the end. Mike Sekowsky drew the series, and on this job his rendering of the Martian jungle made for a richly repulsive alien atmosphere.

*Mystery In Space* #58 features a wonderful Adam Strange adventure, "The Chariot in the Sky." The "hook" here is that the characters of Greek and Roman mythology, Apollo, Hercules, and Jupiter, were ancient aliens whose interplanetary abilities were interpreted as divine powers–and it leads into a well-told tale with a three-ring-circus plot as Adam takes on a trio of awesome adversaries. The clever concept is elegantly exploited, and the Carmine Infantino cover and art makes it into a memorable package.

The second story is an adequate 23rd-century spy thriller, but the finale is yet another unusually energetic entry, as a would-be history-making astronaut–who's been scooped on all three of his major enterprises–finds an alloy that allows him to travel through time and precede those who stole his thunder on the cosmic ventures of the first landing on Mars, the first flight through the sun, and the first trip around the universe. He ends up rescuing his predecessors in each case and letting them take the fame, contenting himself with the behind-the-scenes glory of saving them. It's DC SF to the max, and the excellent art by Sid Greene sets it off perfectly.

As an aside, these two books were the first comics ever bought by the author–how like him to jump on the DC bandwagon at the "pinnacle of wonder." Thanks, Julie!

# JULIE AND COMPANY!

JULIE'S CARICATURE BY MURPHY ANDERSON

Four DC greats were "captured" at Motor City Con in 1991: Murphy Anderson, Irwin Hasen, Julie, and Sheldon Moldoff.

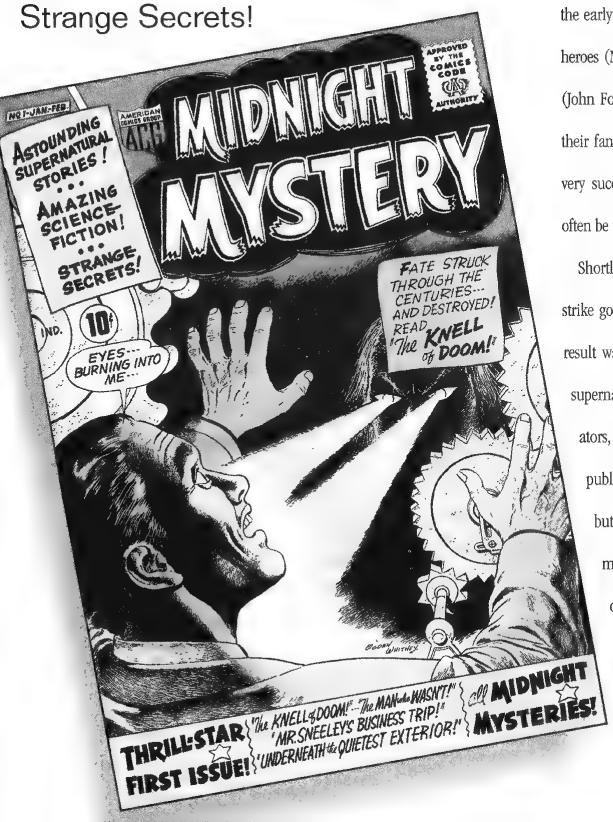
Three Super Men: Curt Swan, Kurt Schaffenberger, and Julie at IthaCon in 1988.

Julie with Pat Calhoun at WonderCon in 1997, with a special photo credit to James Robinson–who's almost as good a photographer as he is a writer!

THE END ■

# ACG CHRONICLES

Midnight Mystery…
Astounding Supernatural Stories!
Amazing Science Fiction!
Strange Secrets!


ASTOUNDING SUPERNATURAL STORIES!
AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION!
STRANGE SECRETS!
10¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ACG
MIDNIGHT MYSTERY
FATE STRUCK THROUGH THE CENTURIES... AND DESTROYED! READ "The KNELL of DOOM!"
EYES... BURNING INTO ME...
THRILL-STAR FIRST ISSUE!
"The KNELL of DOOM!" "The MAN who WASN'T!" "MR. SNEELEY'S BUSINESS TRIP!" "UNDERNEATH the QUIETEST EXTERIOR!"
Coll. MIDNIGHT MYSTERIES!

THE AMERICAN COMICS GROUP (ACG) WAS A MAJOR PLAYER in comics publishing in the 1940s and '50s. Their two showcase titles were the long-running supernatural/SF anthologies *Adventures Into the Unknown* and *Forbidden Worlds*, which were so successful they allowed the company to continue publishing through the chaotic post Comic Code period, and into the 1960s.

ACG published comic titles in all genres (save crime) through the years and even experienced a brief expansion in the early 1960s. Although their later experiments with superheroes (Magicman and Nemesis), and continuing characters (John Force, Magic Agent), didn't seem to go over well with their fans, they stuck with their strengths by introducing the very successful anthology *Unknown Worlds* (which would often be their best seller, during its run.)

Shortly after launching *Unknown Worlds* they hoped to strike gold again with the short lived *Midnight Mystery*. The result was a title that displayed the very best of the ACG–a supernatural/SF/strange mystery anthology, in which the creators, arguably, did their finest work. Perhaps the changing public taste would doom any anthology comic at this time, but Richard Hughes (the mysterious editor, writer, and mastermind (à la Stan Lee) of the ACG) and his stable of artists, gave it their best shot, and it showed!

Here then, is an overview of the far too brief series of seven issues that stand as a tribute to the underrated little giant… The American Comics Group!

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #1 (JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1961)

The premiere issue featured the blurb "Thrill-Star First Issue"–a curious phrase which revealed that (as opposed to earlier days) being a first issue was a plus!

The masthead, which would adorn all covers, promised "Astounding Supernatural Stories !... Amazing Science Fiction!... Strange Secrets!," which was kind of a combination of what could already be found in the *Adventures Into the Unknown*, *Forbidden Worlds*, and *Unknown Worlds*.

It sports an Ogden Whitney cover illustrating the first story, "The Knell of Doom!" (Whitney would draw, and sign, five of the seven covers for this series. Kurt Schaffenberger drew, and signed, issues #4 and #6.)

The first story starts with a feature, unique to this series, in that, almost every story in the series began with the caricatures and comments of the creators, on the splash pages! It was an expansion of the growing tendency to list story credits, and a different sort of continuation of the "Cryptkeeper" type of story hosts of years past. I like to think it was a demonstration of the pride the creators had in their work for this comic.

The artists were real, although the stable of writers were colorful fantasy characters probably all representing Richard Hughes.

For this story the writer was "Zev Zimmer" (a real macho "Norman Mailer" type, who even sported a broken nose,) and Paul Reinman (who did a more detailed job on his own face than he ever did on any of his characters). It introduces Peter Devin, an investigator of the supernatural, in his first and (surprisingly, since the story has the feel of a series) only appearance, who solves the mystery of a town that dies without explanation once per century (could this have been a John Force prototype?) It's a good story, but nothing special.

A text page story by "Pierce Rand" follows. It is the only text page filler of the series, as the letter page expands to two pages with the next issue.

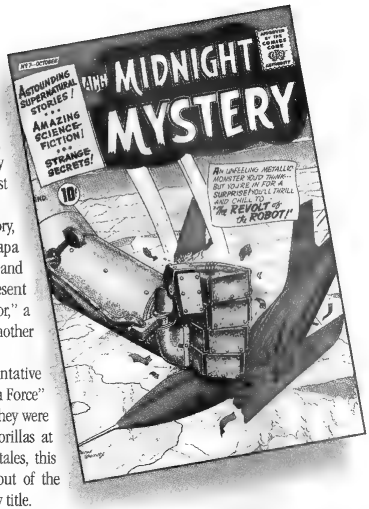
We're exposed to "The Man Who Wasn't" in the 2nd story, by Kurato Osaki (a witty combination of both O'Henry and Saki –the two great twist ending prose writers–though his caricature reveals him to be a true oriental!) and John Rosenberger (who, for some reason, always signs his name "John R.") of "Adventures of the Jaguar" fame. In this tale "Muggins" the monkey, saves the day when a science experiment goes awry.

The "Mystery Mailbag" page explains that this title is an attempt to deliver the best in amazing stories of the occult, SF, and strange secrets from the past. It includes an invitation to include full addresses, so fans can communicate with each other, and the creators themselves.

The third story, in the words of writer "Pierre Alonzo," is a tale of "a mousy guy who starts off killing bugs . . . and winds up saving you, me, and the whole durned earth!" entitled "Mr. Sneeley's Business Trip." The art is by John Forte (looking a lot like Stone Boy of the Legion of Substitute Heroes) and he comments that this is his first chance to illustrate dancing cockroaches and ants (yes, they are in here!) This is the best story and art of the issue.

In the fourth and final story, "Shane O'Shea" (a "Papa Hemingway" type character) and Ogden Whitney present "Underneath the Quiet Exterior," a tale of reincarnation and another ACG milksop character.

Although a good representative comic of the type, with a "John Force" character, an ACG ape story (they were almost as prevalent as the gorillas at DC) and two "mousy guys" tales, this first issue is really nothing out of the ordinary for an ACG anthology title.


ASTOUNDING SUPERNATURAL STORIES! ... AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION! ... STRANGE SECRETS!
MIDNIGHT MYSTERY
10¢
"THE REVOLT OF THE ROBOT!"

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #2 (MARCH/APRIL, 1961)

With the second issue, they pulled out all the stops, beginning with the first story, "Spacemen Against the Supernatural" –an interesting combination of the ACG-unknown and SF, by Kurato Osaki and Ogden Whitney. This fable had everything –Nazis, atomic blasts, Earth in peril from space, invading aliens, witches, Frankenstein and other denizens of the "Unknown," and the underdog victory for another ACG nebbish, in a wild and rewarding 16 pager!

The second story, "Ivar's Playmates!" deals with a child's all-too-real imaginings. It was written by "Lafcadio Lee" (I love this name!), with his trademark beret and ascot, and drawn by Tom Hickey.

A third story, of "strange secrets," is by "Shane O'Shea" and John R. It is the cover-featured tale, "The Opal of Ali Khan!" which deals with a revenge seeking genie "Oshtii" that wins such an infamous reputation in the letter pages of future issues. This story is labeled a "real stinker" by the editor, in future letter pages (in fact, in issue #5, the editor actually tries to convince an appreciative fan that he should hate this story! Unusual, but a good example of Hughes' trademark sincerity!), but, although nothing special, I wouldn't call it a stinker.

BY ROLF GERDAU

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #3 (MAY/JUNE, 1961)

The cover of this issue depicts a flying elephant (but with bat-wings, so as not to be confused with Dumbo!) illustrating the short story, "Mystery Elephant."

The first story is an interesting twist-ending "strange secret" tale of reincarnation, by "Zev Zimmer" and John Forte, entitled

ALL COVERS © ACG

"The Men Who Saved Arkville!"

The following two page letter column, features the first fan letters and their full addresses. In a cryptic response to one letter, the editor explains that the ACG also publishes *Adventures Into the Unknown*, *Forbidden Worlds*, and *Unknown Worlds*, "although there are certain differences among them," but, curiously, he doesn't elaborate!

"Mystery Elephant," is the second story, by "Kurato Osaki" and Paul Reinman, and also features an interesting twist ending.

SF is the theme of the third tale, by "Pierre Alonzo," and a caricatureless Ed Moritz. Time travel is researched, budgeted for, and explored in "Project It!"

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #4 (JULY, 1961)

The first Kurt Schaffenberger cover graces the fourth entry (now published monthly) finely illustrating the lead story "A Slight Change of Luck!" by "Shane O'Shea" and Paul Reinman. A case of luck and mistaken identity results in great changes in the lives of two men.

A one-page "Uncanny Mysteries" feature follows, making this series resemble the other ACG titles even more.

The letter pages contain one (of many letters sent to the ACG through the years) from Jimmy Carter, of Dallas, Texas. And another letter mentions "The Twilight Zone," "Alcoa Presents," and Boris Karloff's "Thriller" TV shows.

The second story, "The Sky Beast!" by "Zev Zimmer" and Ogden Whitney, is the best story so far--a neat SF tale with flying saucers, aliens (suffering from male-pattern baldness) and the incredible "Sky Beast" him/herself! Very well done!

In the third and final story, "Kurato Osaki" tries his hand at a ghost story, with new artist (for this series anyway, though already well established in other ACG titles) Pete Costanza. A female specter haunts the moors, in a well done "Journey Into Oblivion!" (Sounds like a neat title for a comic series!).

All in all, the best overall comic in the series, so far. They are really putting a lot of effort into this series!

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #5 (AUGUST, 1961)

Issue #5 is a curiosity, in that, it is the only cover that does not sport the ACG shield.

The first cover-featured story is "So Long Fellas!" by "Shane O'Shea" (who tells us he's never been prouder of any story) and Ogden Whitney. The caricatures on the splash page are in a different format--being on each side, and inside the splash, rather than above and separate. This is a moving twelve page fable of a ghost and the loyalty of his dog, that reaches across the "Unknown." (It's also nice to have Whitney cover illustrate one of his own stories!).

The following letter page starts with praise for this story, and deservedly so!

The second story, "Unknown Journey," is a SF tale by "Lafcadio Lee" (who says that his last four stories were rejected!?--Hughes has a lot of fun with this alias) and John R. (who, in my opinion, turns in his best art ever, in this story--it is so much more detailed and better laid out than his other work. Hughes must have really been riding his creators to give their all!) This is a real good story with neat aliens and UFO craft.

A one pager follows, with art by Paul Reinman (again--some of the best of his I've ever seen) entitled, "The Things on the Mountain Top!"

The third and last story "The Wizard's Wand!" is by "Pierre Alonzo" with much improved art by Tom Hickey (from issue #2) which has a nice Golden Age quality. This "strange secret" tale deals with Egyptology (either this study was really popular at the time, or Hughes enjoyed it, because there are a lot of ACG stories with Egyptology aspects, at this time!) Two young anthropologists seek the wonder of the magic wand of "Rendor" the royal wizard looking rather "Merlin"ish for an Egyptian!, of the earliest known pharaoh "Monteres" (of the Spanish/Egyptian line, no doubt!) A nice short story with a good twist ending.

Overall, this is a real good issue, with all three stories being top notch!

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #6 (SEPTEMBER, 1961)

Kurt Schaffenberger returns with the cover to issue #6, illustrating "Chain Reaction!"

This issue starts off wonderfully, with (as author "Shane O'Shea" explains) a "crazy, mixed up yarn" about (as Ogden Whitney tells us) "Revenoors from out of space, hillbillies, rocket ships, strange weapons and a skunk named Rosalie" in the classic, "Clem Never Does Anything Big!"

Nobody did stories of this type better than Hughes and Ogden Whitney! Great aliens (and names like "Verstipix") getting drunk and singing tributes to the gals they left behind "with your 12 foot size and your 3 blue eyes and those 14 frantic feet."

This is a great humorous comic story.

The editor questions us, on the following letter page, about the use of humor in stories of this type (as used alot in the other ACG titles.) Do we like it? I vote yes.

Again, "The Opal of Ali Khan," is mentioned by a reader and the editor reiterates it "was a stinker, and if this magazine had any sense, it would fire the editor for pulling such a rock!"

Hughes again has fun with his aliases in an interesting comment in response to a letter–"Lafcadio Lee's a darned good writer if you sit on him–otherwise, he's apt to get careless and require a couple of rejections before he straightens out. But when he's in the groove, he's sure got it! On the other hand, Shane O'Shea requires practically no supervision to turn out his consistently high quality stories. He rarely misses–but we feel that he did when it came to that "Opal" yarn. Let's just say he got it out of his system!" And with that, maybe they got this out of their system, as this story has been panned for three issues straight!

Another letter and response deals with absolutely not using "Draculas" or "Frankensteins" and is so vehement as to reveal how pervasive the Code was, even seven years later! Judge for yourself–"we're puzzled about you thinking that ours is such a fine magazine as to cause you to be a number one fan–because we just don't go in for material of the indicated type. We used to at one time, and so did many other publications. But it turned out that every story was like the one before, with the same horrible faces being constantly featured. That was all it amounted to–warped illustration rather than sound, exciting plot. Nowadays, both our readers and our writers are smarter. The market demands skillful, fascinating stories in which real imagination is used–not galleries of uglies. What we're striving to bring you is fare that challenges, rather than revolts." Wow!

The second story, "Chain Reaction," is a good SF tale of atomic power and time gone wacky by "Lafcadio Lee" and John R., who, again, turns in some of his best work. Compare the detail and faces to his work elsewhere, (such as, "Adventures of the Jaguar") at this same time! It includes great panels of glacier encrusted cities, atomic bomb blasts, and extremely large Mastodons!

The third story, is the four page, "The White Apeman!" by "Zev Zimmer", with excellent art by Pete Costanza.

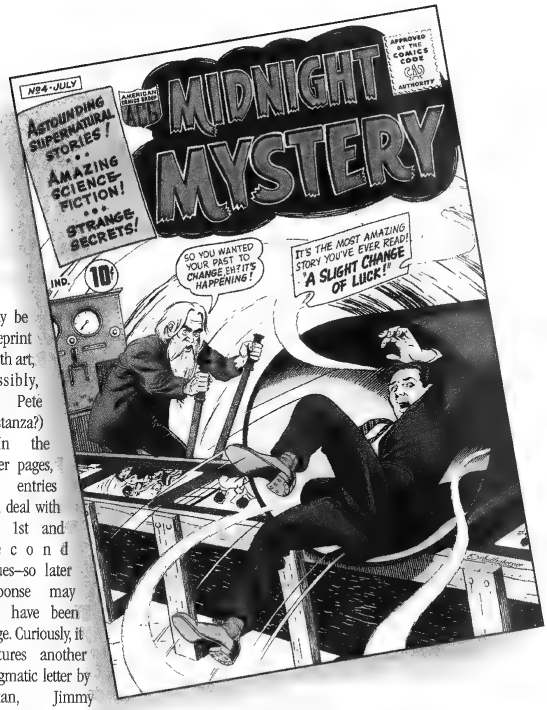
"The Gladiator," by "Pierre Alonzo" and a caricatureless Edd Ashe (the weakest art so far, although he is good at drapery) tells a story of personal triumph and reincarnation.

This is a good issue with the excellent first story, followed by two out of three real good short fillers.

## MIDNIGHT MYSTERY #7 (OCTOBER, 1961)

The final issue #7 sports my personal choice for the best cover of the series–"The Revolt of the Robot!", which is also the lead story. It's the tale of a mechanical man who's "different," by "Pierre Alonzo" and Paul Reinman. This is a good story with a surprise twist.

A three page story follows, and with no creator caricatures or credits, it doesn't bode well. "The Man With the Withered Arm," may be a reprint (with art, possibly, by Pete Costanza?)


NO4 · JULY
ASTOUNDING SUPERNATURAL STORIES!
AMAZING SCIENCE-FICTION!
STRANGE SECRETS!
MIDNIGHT MYSTERY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND. 10¢
SO YOU WANTED YOUR PAST TO CHANGE-EH?IT'S HAPPENING!
IT'S THE MOST AMAZING STORY YOU'VE EVER READ! "A SLIGHT CHANGE OF LUCK!"

In the letter pages, the entries still deal with the 1st and second issues–so later response may not have been large. Curiously, it features another enigmatic letter by Texan, Jimmy Carter. He says he "just started buying ACGs," but he's had letters in them for years (including one in this very series, in issue #4!!)

The "Opal" story (natch!) rates a final mention in a letter and response.

The third story is the excellent, "Jewels of Chimbor," by "Zev Zimmer" and John R. It is a "drug use" story dealing with hallucinogenic mushrooms. The art is very good.

The final story of the series is, "Piercing the Veil," by "Lafcadio Lee" and Tom Hickey. It's not really a supernatural story, but an exposé of fake medium's tricks in story form.

And so it ended. Here was a series where you could see the regular ACG artists at their very best. This was no run of the mill hack work. The lack of response must have been disheartening to all involved, and even though the supernatural anthology format would remain relatively successful in other ACG titles, (until the intro of superheroes in 1965) it would be six years before a new entry in the genre would be attempted, with the ill-fated "Gasp!"

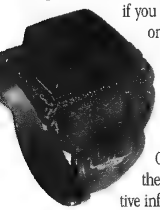
Richard Hughes and the ACG were traveling a downhill slope, being masters of a genre with a rapidly declining audience, during the ascension of the superheroes of the Silver Age. But this series proves that they would not go down without a fight! ■

# Atom Bombs and

Most of us have fingers, and let's face it, they can be pretty plain. That's why we have rings—to spice up an otherwise ordinary digit. The rings in this article showcase some of the most interesting designs created to ornament your finger, and the hoops you had to jump through to get that particular ring on your hand. The following examples from days gone by highlight some of the most interesting and novel that the realm of toy ring collectibles has to offer.

## Captain Midnight Mystic Sun-God Ring (1947)

In the 1940s, kids could rest comfortably in the evenings knowing that the forces of evil were kept at bay because Captain Midnight and his Secret Squadron patrolled the night sky. Well, that's only if you believe everything you hear on the radio. Fans of the Captain Midnight radio show could obtain this ring by mailing in 10¢ and the thin metal seal from under the lid of a can of Ovaltine. The ring allowed the wearer to pass their sensitive information back and forth... via a secret compartment located beneath the ring's red plastic stone. The stone was designed to simulate the luscious red glow of a ruby, a symbol of the Aztec Sun-God's temple, where blood sacrifices were made. Simple to use if you knew the secret, the stone slid out of place to put or retrieve notes, and was easily returned to position once done to fool meddling strangers. Ornamenting the ring's side is Tonathiuh, the Sun-God, the most popular of the Aztec gods. Also, as if the ingenious compartment wasn't enough to guarantee safe passage for your secrets, the Aztec symbol of good luck was located below the Sun-God to safeguard the wearer. (NM $1,200)

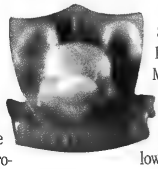


## Captain Video Rocket Ring (1950s)

Premiering in 1949, Captain Video beat out Buck Rogers as television's first venture into space. This notoriously low budget production was one of the most popular children's shows of the time. Two Power House candy bar wrappers and 20¢ would entitle fans of the show to this Captain Video Rocket Ring, provided you filled everything out and mailed it in correctly. The charm of this ring, which seemed to have a higher production value than the actual TV show, is that it provides the owner with options. You can wear it as a ring or detach the rocket pendant and carry it in your pocket or feed a string through the pendant's loop and wear it as a necklace or attach it to your key ring (although if you're old enough to drive and are still playing with this ring, you really need to look at your collector habits). As if that wasn't enough to attract fans, the picture of Captain Video in the top compartment glows in the dark (just in case you're out after curfew and need to prove your Captain Video loyalty). The rocket pendant portion also functions as a secret alarm and signal whistle (because kids love to make noise) and finally the window in the rocket compartment is actually a magnifying glass (which can help older collectors closer inspect the ring before purchase). (NM $800)

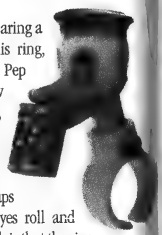
## Mickey Mouse Sugar Jets Rings (1950s)

What kid doesn't need a bowl of hyper-sugary cereal in the morning to give them that fresh start to the day? As an added bonus to the sugar rush, with Sugar Jets cereal kids could also collect



8 different rings of their favorite Disney characters: Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Pluto, Pinocchio, Dumbo, Snow White and Peter Pan in vibrant red, yellow, blue, green, or orange. They were even made out of unbreakable plastic. (Can't you hear mom saying "No, you can't open the next box until you've finished the last one?") The rings were produced to promote the Mickey Mouse Club on ABC-TV. (NM $40-$80 each)

## Donald Duck Living Toy Ring (1949)



A ring so life-like, it's like wearing a live duck on your finger. This ring, available through Kellogg's Pep Whole Wheat Flakes at the low cost of one box top and 25¢, did everything necessary to convince someone that a ring could really be alive; Donald's beak opens and snaps shut, his head swivels, his eyes roll and even glow in the dark. The trick is that the ring comes complete with a small metal box of Pep cereal (the box is extremely rare) which is actually a magnet. As you move the box in relation to Donald's metal head, the ring comes alive. ($250-$400)

## Fireball Twigg Explorer Ring (1948)

Any kid who's ever been lost in the woods will kick himself when finding out about this ring. Equipped with some of the very same equipment that brought Columbus over the seas to decimate indigenous populations, the Fireball Twigg Explorer Ring is fully capable of helping you find

# Dragon's Eyes!

By Benn Ray

your way home in time for supper. Enclosed in the protective clear plastic dome, just like the real deal, is not only a sun dial but a magnetic compass that glows in the dark. This must-have for any would-be explorer only cost 25¢ and a box top from Post cereal, which is significantly less than what Columbus paid for his compass. ($50-$150)

## Good Luck Initial Ring (1952)

It is BIG! It is MASSIVE! It is your very own initials in 24k gold-plate on your very own finger. Evidently, back in 1952 it was lucky to wear your initials, because the charm of this ring aside from being 24k gold-plated, big and massive is that it brought you good luck. However, to this day, it has still not been scientifically proven. What has been proven, however, is that if you wanted the luck, you'd have to send in the front cover of any Smith Brothers box of cough drops and 25¢. ($50-$120)

## Green Hornet Seal Ring (1947)

The Green Hornet and sidekick Kato first began their decades-old clash with the underworld on the radio in 1936. Under the Hornet's mask was newspaper publisher Britt Reid, grandnephew of the Lone Ranger (both the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet radio shows were created by George W. Trendle and written largely by Frank Striker). Since then, a TV series (with none other than martial arts legend Bruce Lee as Kato), chapter plays, comic books and a film in the works has garnered these heroes legions of followers. All fans of the Green Hornet had to do to get this ring was cut out the words "Model City" from a Betty Crocker Cereal Tray and enclose 15¢. Aside from the seal that would leave the Green Hornet signet on soft material, this ring also boasted a glow-in-the-dark base with a swinging shutter that functioned as a Secret Signal Radiator to help send messages to your own sidekick and a secret money compartment since wallets are way too obvious for most crimefighters. ($NM $1,200)

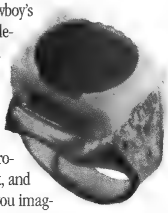
## Jack Armstrong Dragon's Eye Ring (1940s)

Hitting the radio airwaves in 1933, Jack Armstrong ruled until 1951 as one of the most popular and longest-running radio adventure series ever. Even though he started out a sports hero at Hudson High School, he ended up tackling adventures all around the globe. So, what type of breakfast would any high school world adventurer have? Why, the "Breakfast of Champions," Wheaties cereal. This ring was offered as a promotion through Wheaties for the price of 1 box top and 10¢. To conform to the contours of your finger, the ring could be soaked in water to expand. Unfortunately, this resulted in many cracked examples of this glow-in-the-dark ring, making it difficult to find in good condition. (NM $1,300)

## Lone Ranger Atomic Bomb Ring (1946)

Right after World War II, America entered into the Atomic Age. So what kid wouldn't be thrilled with carrying around his own nuclear device? Fortunately, with 10¢ and a Cheerios box top, the Lone Ranger would set you up with one. And what a beauty it is: Aluminum warhead, bombardier's insignia, secret message compartment in the tail fin, a 4-pronged removable tail fin that shows atoms smashing inside the ring (magnified Radium) when exposed in a dark room, and a base with gem stone inserts and gold-plated lightning bolts. Even though there were parental concerns about a radioactive ring, it lasted as a premium into the 1950s, with over 1,000,000 produced. Of course, the ring was completely safe, but everyone was sketchy about radiation at the beginning of the Atomic Age. ($50-$200)

## Sky King's Mystery Picture Ring (1940s)



Sky King was America's favorite flying cowboy when the radio show first aired in 1946. The show was even capable of making the successful switch to television in the early '50s. By sending in the metal round disc from inside a jar of Peter Pan Peanut Butter and 15¢, fans of the cowboy's aerial exploits could celebrate their loyalty with a ring that not only glows in the dark, but also offers a changing picture of Sky King, sends secret messages and codes notes, provides a secret compartment, and has a built in stamp. Can you imagine any child not being thrilled with strapping this cowboy onto his finger? (NM $1,000)

Well, there you have it. 10 rings, 10 fingers. For those of you with out 10 fingers but with all these rings, double up or set up a rotational wearing schedule. However, wearing them, playing with them, is what they were made for, and looking at the great designs above, how could any collector resist? Admittedly, the effort and money required to obtain these treasures is considerable (whether you're a kid bugging a parent for a dime or you are an adult bugging your spouse to let you spend the money), but they're really worth it! ■

# Investors are still out there!

This month, I polled many collectors and hobbyists as to their take on the market based on the summer conventions so far. Even though there are still have a few major conventions left (and a Christie's Auction) some continuing themes were consistently reported.

The first area was that scarcity is a key piston in the marketplace engine... clearly, material that is known to be scarce is selling extremely well. It doesn't even seem to matter if the book is considered "classic" or not, or at least it didn't this summer. As collectors get savvy about how truly scarce many of comics really are, the more there will likely be increased demand. And when this is coupled with the fact that many books in this category (especially 1946-61 material from smaller publishers) still Guide below the $100 mark NM, it's easy to see why this post Gold/pre-Silver/ Silver is so exciting and sells so well.

The second area is covers. Great covers also sell, even if they have not been recognized yet by the mainstream hobby. Oldsters and newcomers are moving to cover collecting, going straight for the great covers... especially the more affordable examples. Although many of the "icon" covers are in short supply (and/or locked up in collections) many collectors have established their own criteria for "collectible covers" and that translates to a little less competition and a little more variety.

Another area of consensus (and contrary to some rumors) is that investors are still out there. If the book has a track record, and is still perceived to be fairly priced, it definitely has an investor as well as a collector following. Speculators are still out there too, they've just moved into more focused and sometimes more esoteric genres. Often the books they initially want are rarely available, so they move on to the next area of opportunity. Talk to any dealer... the impact of speculation has retreated to older material (pre 1965) it is still a force in the hobby.

## Pre Golden Age/Golden Age (1933-45)

Many dealers reported having a "nice" first day at San Diego. It slacked off after that at a more rapid pace than in previous years. Collectors/hobbyists report that they had plenty of cash ready to spend at the conventions, but often could not find what they wanted. Some reported that they felt the great books had already been sold via "mail order" etc... yet others who shop primarily at conventions report that they are there because many mail order catalogs seem "slim." Tell us what your experience has been of late CBM readers, and we'll report it in these pages.

Sales: Batman #25 VF $980; Captain Marvel #3 FN+ $900; Four Color #12 FN $275; Hit #5 GD $450; Magic #1 GD $475; Military #1 appVG $825; National Comics #8 FN/VF $975; Police Comics #5 FN+ $525; Sparkler #2 FN $250; Sensation #100 VF/NM $500; Spy Smasher #1 GD $395; Wonder Woman #2 GD $350.

## Post Golden Age/Pre Silver Age (1946-56)

What's your pleasure? Good girl, pre-Code horror or crime? Romance, Baker, Kubert, or Cole? The well has not even begun to be tapped, and collectors are in a "mad scramble" to get a hold of many of these books before they have to compete head to head with dealers. Confusion is rampant when it comes to pricing, and many multiples seems to be the rule, rather than the exception.

Sales: Batman #105 VF/NM $520; Captain Flight #5 VG+ $135; Capt. Video #2 FN $210; Dagar #19 NM $510; Gift Comics #4 VG/FN $115; Modern Comics #102 FN+ $160; Moon Girl #5 FN $370; My Great Love #1 VF $185; Mystic Tales #4 NM $200; Namora #1 GD $250; Prison Break #1 GD $75; Space Adventures #1 FN/VF $275.

*Continued on page 72*

**GREG WHITE**
17 W MONUMENT AVENUE
KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA 34741
(407) 870-0400

Hello from central Florida. As our summer winds down we are in the midst of another average year. Certain items are selling, however too much of the mainstream comics just sit at the store or at comic conventions. Even at 25% below Overstreet guide I have trouble moving most books here.

I just returned from the San D ego Con and the story was much the same for me tnere. There was such a huge selection of Golden Age and key Silver Age books that the vast majority of them remained on backboards all weekend long, with sales most of the 4 days being flat and average.

Sales: (There were a few)... All Star #33 FN/VF $900; Batman #31 VF $400; Superman #17 VF/NM $1,250; Fantastic Four #4 VG $400, X-Men #1 GD $300, and many other books in the $20-50 range.)

Pressed for time and just returning from the con made for a short report this month. I'll be back next issue with my regular information. Don't forget, if your in the Disney World area, stop by for a chat! I'd love to hear from you!

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Don't let anybody kid you... the market is still very strong in certain areas and active all the way around.

**Golden Age DC:** Demand for early issues is very powerful at the moment. More Fun issues from #52-76 *Continued on page 72*

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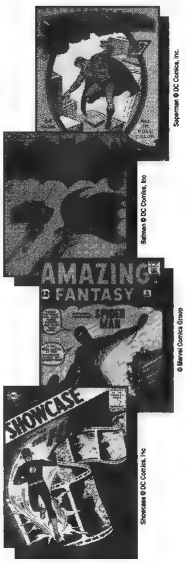


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## MARKET REPORTS

*Continued from page 70*

are easily fetching above Guide prices here, even low grades and restored issues. I get requests for #54 and #65 more frequently than others, no doubt due to the classic Specter covers on these two books. However, the big Keys (#52, 53 and 55) are the toughest to sell due to the high prices. Following close behind are the issues of Action #1-20 although many collectors feel that they become more common around #15. Superman covers on these issues are on fire, I haven't talked to anyone who wouldn't want to own an Action #7. The last strong DC seller right now are the early issues of Adventure from about #40-79 since many collectors feel that they are relatively undervalued when compared to their More Fun, Action, and Detective counterparts.

### SCHIFFMAN CONT.

#### Silver Age (1956-69)

Lately Atlas and off-beat DC titles are leading the way. With the rumors flying, many are betting on a renewed Silver Age boom. That's because many high grade titles from both Marvel and DC are selling fairly well. Dealers report more first time buyers entering this segment of the market above all others. Baby boomers + disposable income + courteous dealers + fair pricing = new life for this part of the hobby.

Sales: Avengers #57 NM $90; Batman #121 GD 485; Betty & Me #1 VF/NM $120; Brave & Bold #84 NM $55; Captain America #100 GD $60, Captain America #117 NM $55; Green Lantern #1 GD+ $285; GI Combat #87 GD $95; Josie #1 FN $75; Jughead's Fantasy #1 FN/VF $175; Showcase #27 FN $220; Star Trek #1 VF/NM $500; Strange Adventures #100 NM $160; Strange Tales #79 NM $425; X-Men #2 VF $650.

#### Bronze Age (1970-79)

Auctions anyone? CBM, CBG, private catalogues, on line or mail in bids... are prevalent. Many collectors report that auctions may be the way to really determine the worth of many of these books. Of course, high grade is the paramount criteria for most fanatic Bronze Age collectors... and boy are they willing to pay for it! In contrast, there are a few books that seem in demand even in mid-grade including the amazing Homer the Happy Ghost #1 in FN which sold for a record $110! I've haven't spoken with so many enthusiastic collectors in quite some time.

Sales: Avengers #83 NM $22; Brave & Bold #91 $35; Beware #1 NM $10; The Cat #1 NM $12; Green Lantern #76 NM $175; Human Torch #1 NM $16; Laurel and Hardy #1 FN $40; Marvel Two in One #1 NM $20; Star Wars #1 (.35 variant) VF/NM $575; Super DC Giant #S-18 FN $15, #S-25 $10; Swamp Thing #7 NM $28; Weird War #1 VF $75; Young Love #109 VF $60.

Lately, I'm inundated with mail... and many express a growing concern about grading and pricing. Everyone seems upset because so much post 1965 material is not selling at Guide prices. And of course everyone is griping at the changing grading standards as the market tightens up. In fact, the two largest gripes from both sides of the table (as usual) seem to be grading and pricing... but hey, what's new about that?

Those are the same two topics that have been discussed, debated, argued, and whined about since the beginning of the hobby! Seems some are always bound to be disappointed, while others are buying and selling like there is no tomorrow. But that's what makes it the comic book marketplace!

What's your opinion? Write to CBM, PO Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178-0700... and let us know! Or you can FAX to (619) 437-1993 or E-mail to cbm.gemstonepub.com ■

*Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.*

**Timely:** Low grade is the key word here. High grade no longer sells here the way is has in years past because of the price corrections on these books after the craze ended. Cap still leads here, followed closely by Marvel Mystery. All Winners also garners collector acclaim in the number of requests. The other titles are not as popular unless specific issues are available such as Daring Mystery #2 or Mystic #7-10.

**Other Companies:** Nedor is still hot with certain airbrush covers still scorching like Fighting Yank #23 and Startling #49... and the Schomburg war covers are still way under priced on the big titles like Exciting, Startling, Black Terror, and Fighting Yank. Most of these can be had for fifty dollars or less in GD.

Lou Fine covers on the Fox titles are still melting collectors' hands especially the Wonder Worlds #3, 7 and 11. Catman is very difficult to come by and is still very hot. Anyone out there have a #20 they want to part with? That book is my number one requested Golden Age comic!

**Pre-Code Horror** dominates the pre-Code requests as well as the entire comic market right now. Weird Mysteries sells like hot cakes. I think Weird Mysteries #5 is the book of the year... everyone seems to want it. Mr Mystery has a solid hold on the two spot. Most of the classic horror covers are all bringing well above Guide right now. In the next year I predict that more collectors concentrating on the interiors... with the more gore the better. This is due to the rising costs of the classic cover issues.

Most of us have already seen savvy collectors buying up the pre-Code war and crime comics at conventions. War Fury #1, Fight Against Crime #20, Perfect Crime #28, and Underworld Crime #7 are the pack leaders in the request department. Romance is getting stronger with the requests for the Baker art issues increasing. A real hidden value is the Schomburg air brush covers on Fairfax books (they only Guide at $45 in NM!)

**Silver Age:** Marvel moves at 2 to 3 times Guide for super high grade. The DCs sell briskly as well in grade. Lower grade books sell if the prices are cheap since people buy these for the following reasons: they want to read them, they haven't gotten into Golden Age because they think it's too expensive, and they want to collect their favorite titles.

See you in a future issue of CBM! ■

## MARKETPLACE MAIL

*Continued from page 9*

our books in five or ten years? Think about it! I have been setting up at conventions for 26 consecutive years, I know the majority of the Golden age/Silver age dealers. I had plenty of time on my hands in San Diego and spoke to many of these dealers.

I've heard the story was the same all over - everyone had nice books, but few of us had paying customers! Sure there were plenty of lookers –but few who were willing to pull the trigger. A combination of prices too high and an overall lack of interest from anyone under the age of 35 made for a less than spectacular weekend.

Where is the next generation of Golden age/Silver age collectors going to come from? What is going to happen when guys like myself who have been collecting all our lives reach our 60's and 70's and decide it is time to cash in our chips? Will there be anyone interested in buying our comics? If so at what price? I will be sitting there in retirement with full runs of most of the 'popular titles' wondering if I can make a few bucks on the collection.

Fortunately for me I have collected all my life out of a sincere love for the medium. My return has been in the pure enjoyment I have received from reading (yes, I actually read my golden age books) and appreciating the artwork in these thousands of vintage comics. Money has never been the driving factor in putting my sets together, however I do wonder at times who will still be around in 20 years to purchase whichever comics I do not take to the grave with me. It will be interesting to see. Thankfully I will still be able to reread the books if I do find out that there is no appreciable market for them! San Diego did nothing to put a positive spin on this dilemma. Any dealer/collector who primarily handles Golden Age/Silver Age must be concerned with this situation. The only people I saw who had a good retail weekend (retail is the key word here–anybody can blow their stock out at 75% off) were those who dealt in Japanese import toys, Nightmare toys, adult/esoteric and other non mainstream items. Those of us who had the audacity to bring comic books to the San Diego Comic Con just sat around.

What to expect next year? (other than a very unpopular price increase for each booth). We will see. I plan to bring a more varied selection. If 1998 is another dismal retail show many of us may not be back. It will be sad if the largest comic book show in the world becomes nothing more than a media event. Time will tell.

Other San Diego observations include a much cleaner show product wise (they have really toned down the adult aspect), fewer scantily clad 'bad girls' hanging out at booths, fewer 'known' guests in attendance. There were so many no names at the artists alley that one needed a scorecard. Attendance was strong, especially on Saturday. However, few of those who came thru the door were serious buyers of pre-1965 product. Perhaps it is time for a show that is strictly older material and geared to promote interest in the vintage products.

Greg White, Florida

### Letter from Australia

First let me congratulate you on the continued excellence of CBM each month. Each issue is a real treat and a highlight of my month. Also, let me mention your back issue service. I ordered issue #23 last year, (luckily before it sold out) and received it very promptly and in NM–MT condition.

I was very interested to read in issue #49's Marketplace Mail about the Charlton Portfolio and Charlton Bullseye issues. I have been searching unsuccessfully for years for Charlton Bullseye #1 & 2, (the black and white issues, published by CPL/Gang Publications in 1975). In particular I'd love to read the Captain Atom stories in these issues, which conclude the continued story from Charlton's Captain Atom #89. I read the original Charlton Captain Atom issues back in the sixties and was most frustrated when Captain Atom #90 never appeared.

I wonder if there is some kind of collector somewhere who has these Charlton Bullseye issues and who would be willing to photocopy and send the Captain Atom stories to me. Naturally I'd pay for the cost, plus postage etc. Believe me, I'd be very appreciative. (CBM–can you please pass my full address on to anyone who responds?)

Before I close, any chance of a Herbie and/or Silver Age ACG article in the near future?

John R. Kelly

*See "Midnight Mystery" in this issue!*

### Changing Alter-Egos

Superheroes adopting new alter-egos was a practice that gained popularity in the1960s with Marvel Comics' Ant-Man becoming Giant-Man, Goliath, and finally Yellowjacket. Others (such as Hawkeye becoming Goliath) followed suit, and today changing alter-egos is fairly

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commonplace.

After extensive research, I have discovered the first comic book hero to adopt a new alter-ego was Rex Fury who first appeared within the pages of Tim Holt #6 as "The Calico Kid" in May, 1949. The historic first alter-ego switch took place in Tim Holt #11 (1949) when "Calico Kid" adopted the guise of "the Ghost Rider." Rex Fury may also have the distinction of being the first comic character/fictional character to switch alter-egos, making him very unique.

The character of "The Ghost Rider" is the first Western hero to don a full face mask. His influence on the mask of Spider-Man and the entire costume of Moon Knight should be evident to any comics fan.

I hope that you are as excited about this new data as I am. For me, it is this type of discovery that demonstrates the uniqueness of comic book characters. May the Ghost Rider roam the four-color plains forevermore....

John Mlachnik, Minnesota

*Nice research John… thanks for sharing it with CBM readers. May you continue to roam the pages of obscure westerns!*

### Who is the mysterious LD?

Enclosed, please find copies of some of the covers by artist "LD." My research is limited to titles which I collect. So far, I have found "LD" covers on the following esoteric DC titles: Ghosts, House of Mystery, House of Secrets, Weird War Tales and Weird Western Tales. I think he does good work and I would really like to know who he is. I have checked the Overstreet Price Guide, but no luck. Can anybody help? Thank you,

David Otis Miller, Tennessee

*CAN anybody help???*

### Scarce All Flash #32?

In regards to the letter written by Mike Smith in CBM #46, many books published during the war and in the following years thereafter had the factory trimmed pages. I myself and many of my associates call them roll end books. In most cases there were two such trimmed pages and sometimes four trimmed pages. And on the rare occasion when enough advertising was not sold, there was an uneven page count. Yes, they lied to you, after all, how many people back then were worried about page counts? During the war everything was in short supply. (For example, one staple in comics!) Using roll ends of paper was very labor intensive, but existed because of the paper shortage. Pulp and paper suppliers showed favoritism to publishers who pushed war bonds and a kick their ass philosophy. I have run across these roll end books many times and for some ridiculous reason, seen them as late as 1951!

Addressing the issue of scarcity, in the 34 years I have been collecting, I have owned and seen many comics. I have owned a couple of stores and rubbed shoulders with the some of the better known collectors. Over the years, I have had a lot of scarce and rare books go through my hands. I wish I still had some of them! Ha! But in terms of scarcity, I have had an Adventure #210 in VF and seen at least six or seven others. Adventure #72 in near VF and seen five others. Flash #104 in VG/FN and seen four others. Star Spangled #60 in VF and seen 3 others (note: Not in Gerber!). Detective #18 and seen 1 other. I even put together a nice set of Fox and Crow.

But in the last 10-12 years I have looked for an All Flash #32 and have never seen one! That is until recently when I paid 2 ½ times Guide for a Fair+ that came out of a collection. It looks VG but is brittle. This book is a genuine "scarce" and not only has the origin of the Fiddler, but the first appearance by Star Sapphire. Yes, Star Sapphire in 1948 and not Green Lantern #16 in 1962!

I realize you won't print this, but this book is a scarce early key and demands some attention in the Guide.

B. Zaharia, Canada

### Happy Birthday Carl Barks

Well, it's good to have an occasion to write to you again. I hope things are going well for you. Enclosed is a copy of my latest Carl Barks video, "Happy Birthday Carl Barks." I hope you find it entertaining.

Regarding CBM, you have set a new standard of excellence with the recent issue on Julius Schwartz. Heretofore, I had only a vague awareness of Mr. Schwartz' long history of involvement in the science-fiction industry.

The detailed article on the origin of The Time Traveller was fascinating to say the least. Having personally met Julius Schwartz and Forrest J. Ackerman, and having followed their careers for over thirty years, I feel as if I am a part of their stories, if only in some small way.

Also, the personal correspondence which I received from Mort Weisinger when I was ten

years old is one of my most prized possessions from that era. I feel I have known these gentlemen all my life. Thank you for filling in some gaps. Once a month my day is made when I receive the latest ish of Comic Book Marketplace!

Tom Barker, Indiana

### Steve Geppi writes

Dear Gary and Lisa... The last few issues of the magazine have looked great! The Julie Schwartz interview in CBM #50 and the Al Williamson issue (CBM #51) were superb. I'm really pleased with the magazine's progress, but I'm sure you know which one I can't wait to see... CBM #52, the Archie issue!

I've enclosed the picture you requested. At the time it was taken I had a wonderful conversation with Archie execs Michael Silberkleit (that's him on the left) and Richard Goldwater (at right)... including some great reminiscences about the Golden Age and Silver Age of Archie Comics. As you know, I'm quite a fan of the company and avidly collect the older material. (In the snapshot, I'm holding the Mile High copies of two wonderful Archie key issues—Pep 22 and Archie 1—that I recently bought from another collector.)

At any rate, keep up the good work and I look forward to reading the completed Archie issue with great anticipation. Best regards,

Steve Geppi, Maryland

### A real favourite!

I'm a big DC fan, but none of the Archives have really covered the Charlton, Fawcett and Quality heroes. Any chance of devoting an entire issue to one of the groups?

Jerry Ordway's run on The Power of Shazam has really made me interested in the Fawcett characters, particularly the non Marvel family heroes: Bulletman, etc.

The Ray is one of my favorite heroes and Max Mercury/Quicksilver. Any chance of a more in-depth feature on these heroes?

Charlton's Captain Atom—a real favourite. I just picked up Space Adventure #37—it's like a whole new world, so innocent and trusting. It amazes me how Alan Moore could take a character and transform him so completely.

Another of my favourites is Thunderbolt, it's a shame Mike Collins' 12-issue run didn't take off

saleswise, but sometimes I think DC launches a title just to re-introduce a character to a wider audience. The same happened with Black Condor and a dozen other titles.

So it would be nice if you could feature specials on all three of these groups of heroes.

Steven Morrell, Sheffield, England

### Infantino-Anderson Batman

Your issue #49 was very enjoyable with its emphasis on Batman. With all the hoopla about the character these days, very little is focused on his earlier days. The (uncredited) Infantino-Anderson cover remains as spectacular a drawing of the Dynamic Duo as the first time I saw it, as a poster insert in one of the mid-'60's Schwartz edited Batman books. The cover proves that the creature of the night aspect of Batman was not suddenly rediscovered by Adams, and that Infantino was the Batman artist of the '60s, ranking up there in the pantheon of great Batman artists, along with Robinson, Sprang, Jack Burnley and others.

And one of those others includes Jim Aparo, who has been rarely interviewed. I agree that one of the reasons he is not thought more highly of is because he has been so consistent over the years, unlike Adams or Rogers or some others who made a big splash and then left. However, I think his work looks best when he inks it himself, and many of his current inkers have not brought out the full beauty and power of his work.

Interesting that two of your writers had such diverse opinions of the '50's Batman. S. C. Ringgenberg more or less dismisses Batman stories from that period, holding to the party line that until O'Neil and Adams brought in the post-camp Batman in the early '70s, that Batman stories were lame. Michelle Nolan, however, correctly points out that there were a lot of different types of Batman stories in this period, and the "science-fiction" (which is hardly the correct term for these stories) stories with strange physical transformations and aliens only made up part of the canon (albeit an increasingly greater part in the late '50s and early '60s).

But the early '50s was truly a great time for Batman. Nolan's comments on reading the early Batman annuals and savoring those early '50s reprints echoes my own feelings. I remember wondering why the current Batman wasn't as well drawn or plotted as those stories, and wondered why there were so many monsters and so few mysteries. I especially wondered why "Bob Kane's" art had changed so much—it wasn't


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until years later that I realized that the stories that had the greatest impact for me were mostly drawn by the anonymous Dick Sprang and (on the Sunday strip reprints) Jack Burnley. And there are some other artists, like Lew Schwartz and some that still are nameless, that I enjoyed. As far as writers, they've rarely been identified, although Bill Finger stories usually could be recognized by his giant props.

But I think Nolan's list of reprinted Detective stories contains several omissions. More than 34 (although only 32 appear on the list) of the 120 stories have been reprinted. My records show that 56 have. And more than 9 of the 48 from 1950-53 have been reprinted: 17, in fact, with one half of all the '52 and '53 stories reprinted! (Only 1 from '51, though.) Actually, one solo Batman title that has seen little reprint action has been World's Finest: only 5 of the 26 '50's stories have been reprinted. And the Robin feature in Star Spangled has also seen little reprint action.

My list of additions and corrections is attached. By the way, if you need a DC reprint index for certain strips, I began compiling my list of DC reprints back in the late '70s, and believe that it is fairly complete, except for war, love and humor strips. I included artist and writer information where provided, or where I could recognize the artist. Every time I buy a back issue, I check the strips against my list to see if I can identify a story that I still don't have the original issue information. In Batman's case, I also used Michael Fleisher's Batman Encyclopedia to obtain information for issues that I did not have, and I've double checked it against Nolan's list in this issue to verify the stories. Also helpful was the Abbeville Press book reprinting the covers of the first 25 years of Detective Comics.

One last point that Nolan didn't point out regarding former Detective Comics back-up Pow Wow Smith. When Pow Wow trotted over to Western Comics, he apparently used Professor Nichols time machine. In his Detective appearances, Pow Wow was a contemporary character (just like the one that showed up in the Robin Annual, although forty years has elapsed). In Western Comics, he was transplanted to the Old West, in that fluid period post Civil War but before telephones, electricity and cars took hold.

Here is my list of additional Batman stories in Detective that have been reprinted, and where they have appeared:

Det. #179 reprinted in Batman #193; Det. #180 reprinted in Batman paperback #3 (Joker, mid '60s, b&w); Det. #185 reprinted in Batman #203; Det. #186 reprinted in Batman #203; Det. #192 reprinted in Batman #187; Det. #193 reprinted in Batman paperback #3 (Joker, mid '60s, b&w); Det. #196 reprinted in Batman #223; Det. #197 reprinted in Batman #218; Det. #199 reprinted in 80 page Giant #2; Det. #216 reprinted in Batman #187; Det. #218 reprinted in Batman #182; Det. #231 reprinted in Batman #185; Det. #234 reprinted in Batman #218; Det. #238 reprinted in Batman #228; Det. #241 reprinted in Batman #182; Det. #244 reprinted in Batman annual #7, Batman Family #2; Det. #248 reprinted in Batman #223; Det. #253 reprinted in Batman #176; Det. #259 reprinted in Batman #176; Det. #261 reprinted in Batman Family #7; Det. #264 reprinted in Batman #187; Det. #265 reprinted in Batman #187. In addition, #249 was reprinted in Batman #233, not Batman annual #7.

The following stories were also reprinted in these issues: Det. #168 reprinted in Batman #213; Det. #203 reprinted in 80 page Giant #5; Det. #211 reprinted in Batman #198; Det. #230 reprinted in DC Blue Ribbon Digest #5.

Paul Zuckerman, New Jersey

*Thanks for the great info Paul, nice piece of reprint research!*

### The theory of economics!

Must tell you that I thoroughly enjoyed your recap of origins of science fiction fandom in CBM #50, in particular the brief look into the fascinating background of Hugo Gernsback. I would welcome more information on Gernsback and more articles on "scientification" in CBM.

You folks have produced some fine issues over the last several years and I thought I would take advantage of your 50th anniversary to catch up on some overdue props due to you and your contributors for past issues. Some of the articles that have kept me hooked on CBM are:

The Roy Thomas Interview… thanks a lot for this one! Roy has always been my all-time favorite comic book person because of his tremendous writing talent, his editorial stint at Marvel during their creative peak of the early-to-mid '70s, and his obvious love of old comics. I highly recommend his work on the Invaders and What If from the '70s as examples of how much fun comics can be. I look forward to seeing future pieces on (or by!!!) Roy, maybe with mention of what he is working on these days.

The Will Eisner Profile… an educational

accounting of history from a ton of noteworthy creators. Equally impressive were the nicely written framing sequences.

Oddball Archie…this great article by Scott Shaw! in your Spider-Man issue was the first thing I read in CBM and I have been hooked ever since.

The Historical Detective Dan Issue (CBM #36)…you guys deserve some kind of award for this issue. This is the one I would take with me to a deserted island.

Great work from Michelle and Pat…these columns are always a joy. My personal favorite was Michelle's recollection of her quest for the Big Eight. It was nice to hear another collector's story of getting hooked by a house ad!

Those are just a few favorites off the top of my head, but every issue seems to have something special in it. Let me suggest a few subjects for future issues: Gil Kane, Dick Giordano, and R. Crumb. Also, maybe Michelle can give us the scoop on Supersnipe?

At the risk of spoiling the tone of what is meant to be a letter of praise, I would like to bring up the one section of CBM I could do without–the Market Report. The only reason I look at it is to see how shameless the hype is this month. Let me see if I understand the logic: If prices are going up, you should buy before you miss out. And if prices are not going up, you should take advantage of the temporary lull and buy. And if prices are going down, which of course never happens, you should buy then, too. I don't mind a sales pitch–hey, I LIKE to read the ads in your magazine–but do we really need a block of text wasted every month on the theory of economics? Turn the space over to dealers who give us a little more realistic view of the marketplace. Or better yet, expand your articles.

I don't want to end on a negative note, so let me close by thanking you for all the enjoyment and information I get from this classy, quality publication every month.

Steve Cronin, Florida

### From the desk of Roy Thomas

Thanks for another fine issue of CBM, especially for its extended coverage of Julius Schwartz, arguably the most important editor in comics' Silver Age (his only challenger, of course, being Stan Lee). However, I'm writing primarily about a letter in your mail column re: Dan Adkins and "Starhawk."

Certainly Dan was never "fired" because of his art swipes, though Stan and I did worry about certain of them from time to time (such as the use of Kubert Hawkman figures as the basis for Angel figures in X-Men issues I wrote). We were, and I'm sure both still are, admirers of Dan's talent. Of course, technically Dan could never have been fired because he was a freelancer, but we all know what writer Link Yaco means.

Still, since there seems to be some lingering confusion among a few longtime fans about the Starhawk situation in 1969, perhaps it's time it was cleared up once and for all. As the writer/associate editor/co-creator of Marvel's first hero named Starhawk, I'll give it a whack, since Link Yaco didn't quite have it right in one or two ways: (1) Dan was indeed the artist and perhaps co-plotter of the Starhawk origin that was planned for the never-published Marvel Super-Heroes #20 in '69. However, in no way was it ever, as Link Yaco states, Dan's "solo auteur project." I was always the writer and at the very least co-plotter of the story, even if I don't recall if the initial impetus (or the name) was Dan's or mine. In fact, for some years I owned–maybe still do, somewhere–photostats of several of the penciled, inked, and lettered pages of the one Starhawk story. The tale ended with a use of the then catch-phrase about not bending, folding, or mutilating a human being, a minor touch of mine; but I don't recall much else about the story except that Dan's artwork was very good, as usual.

(2) While I'm happy if Dan wound up with an editorial position somewhere around the time of Starhawk's untimely demise, since I like Dan and always enjoyed working with him, his promotion had nothing whatever to do with the cancellation of both that story and of Marvel Super-Heroes itself. Here's what happened:

Sales on the double-size Marvel Super-Heroes were never all that great. Since changing its name from Fantasy Masterpieces in '67, the mag had featured the first two stories of Captain Marvel, followed by a Ross Andru-drawn Spider-Man story Stan wrote but didn't like well enough to put in the regular Spidey title. By then it had been decided MSH would become a showcase title, with a new try-out lead feature followed by reprints. (To me the real *(continued on page 79)*


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*Continued from page 77*

fun was choosing the 1940s-'50s reprints.)

We tried various one-time lead features–the Inhumans; the Phantom Eagle origin; an origin for the modern Black Knight; "Guardians of the Galaxy," which somehow grew from an idea of mine about a future in which the Russians and Chinese had conquered America into a space story written by Arnold Drake; a Ka-Zar story; and a Dr. Doom solo. None made any great impact, and sales of MSH–which cost 25¢ at a time when regular size comics were 12¢ going on 15¢–continued to decline.

In that atmosphere Dan and I readied "Starhawk," and the story was mostly if not entirely finished. We did the ad that appeared in MSH #20 (either Stan or I wrote it; the art of course is Dan's). A striking cover was done by Dan and sent to the office of publisher Martin Goodman…

…and that's what did us in.

Martin Goodman had no faith in science fiction comics. His company's various attempts at it over the years, especially in the 1950s (Unknown Worlds, Space Squadron, Spacemen, et al.) had always bombed out, as far as he was concerned.

With regard to SF, although we didn't know it at the time, he had three particular bugaboos and dislikes–his "three R's": rockets, robots and ray-guns.

And Dan's cover for MSH #21 showed Starhawk amid all three–rockets, robots and ray-guns.

By sheer accident, we hadn't missed a trick in including all three of the elements which Martin Goodman considered deadly.

So he canceled the book. Period. End of story.

Oh, I seem to recall there was some attempt to talk him into going ahead with that final issue, since the story was basically (if not totally) done. But Goodman's mind was made up, and Starhawk and MSH died together. Marvel's 1970's hero of that name had no connection with that Starhawk, except that someone probably picked up the name from the house ad.

It's great that Dan Adkins landed on his feet. Certainly there was no ill feeling toward him on the part of Martin Goodman, Stan, or myself. Stan and I disagreed with Goodman, as a matter of fact, but Stan knew better than to argue with his publisher, and I certainly had no standing to do so.

Though I told Dan at the time precisely what had happened, I can understand if over the years he's forgotten the reason why Starhawk never appeared. It was an episode I'd just as soon forget myself. But I can't.

I like our Starhawk. Best wishes

Roy Thomas, South Carolina

### Because it makes you happy

Really enjoy CBM, the articles, the color splash pages, and artist spotlights.

The "market" report is good also, but I think comic collecting is more of a "life long" search for our past, a look back to when we were younger.

But also the smell of "white" pages, and ink, the hunt down for that missing #! All this and more is what it's all about. Not some numbers on a graph! Or what's "hot" and what's "not".

You should collect because it makes you happy, the "worth" of a comic can only be measured by you! If you happen to get rich along the way, more power to you!

So let's not forget what it's all about….

Ronn E. Sutton

### Returning collector asks…

I finally did track down a copy of Mysteries in Space, the 1980 trade paperback that reprinted some classic stories from Strange Adventures and Mystery in Space. I thoroughly enjoyed it but wish there had been follow-up volumes to see more early Space Cabbies, Captain Comets, etc. Some of us can't really afford those originals at the present time. Even if I could amass a collection of good grade reading copies, I wouldn't know where to go to find them. I often travel the tri-state area of PA/DE/NJ but find that most comic shops in this area are just not what they used to be in terms of available Silver Age of this grade that is truly priced at this grade.

The most current issue of CBM (#50) was beautiful in content, layout and design, and the Julius Schwartz and Captain Comet articles really stand out. I always enjoy Nolan's Notebook as well. The only minor flaw I noted was the poor resolution of a couple of downloaded reproduced covers for one of the articles.

I have recently returned to collecting from several years absence and have a few questions

1) Is there any way to influence DC's production of various Archives editions or even trade paperback reprintings of past Golden and Silver Age favorites? I would love to see Golden Age Sandman, Golden and Silver Age Spectre, Kirby/Wood Challengers, Adam Strange, Golden Age Hawkman, Golden and Silver Age Aquaman, Silver Age Atom, more Silver Age Flash and Green Lantern, and most importantly, an Atomic Knights Archives!

2) Likewise, how about the Marvel Masterpiece series? I'd love to see all of the remaining Fantastic Fours and Amazing Spider-Mans reprinted at least up to their 100th issues. I would also love to see more volumes of Dr. Strange–and wouldn't it be an incredible treat to see Golden Age through Silver Age Bill Everett Sub-Mariners or the Marvel Steranko work get this treatment?

3) Do you have any information of the release date of the DC Photo-Journal Guide from Gerber?

4) Would you have any suggestions as to where I could find the Taylor Illustrated History of Horror Comics?

Well, keep the CBMs coming!

Bob Warner, Delaware

*1) and 2) write to DC and Marvel and let them know how you feel. It's the only way to influence their decision. 3) Ernie tells me that the DC book is in the works right now. 4) Contact Taylor Publishing 1550 West Mockingbird Lane, Dallas, Texas 75235… Mike Benton's excellent series is getting tough to find these days. Also check with Bud Plant at (800) 242-6642, he might have a copy or two for sale.*

*My thanks to everyone who wrote in this time. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to:*

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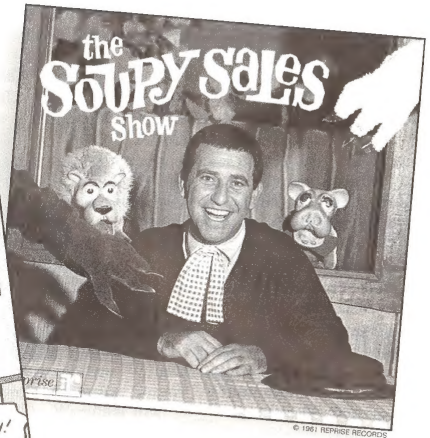


No child of the late fifties and early sixties will ever forget the phenomenally funny *Soupy Sales Show. Starting* out as a locally produced "kids" TV show in Cincinnati and Cleveland, it evolved into a nationally syndicated hit based in Detroit. From there it ultimately became a Monday-through-Friday blockbuster on the ABC TV network. The primary cast consisted of Soupy decked out in battered top hat, baggy sweater, and huge bow tie… and four amazing puppets… Pooky the Lion, Hippy the Hippopotamus (both hand puppets), White Fang, the meanest dog in the world, and Black tooth, the kindest dog in the United States (the latter two just long furry gloves in the shape of paws, the rest of their bodies supposedly off-camera). They were wild, crazy… and kids, teens, and even adults loved the ad-libbed and outrageous antics performed on the show!

In 1961, Reprise Records issues album #R-6010 *The Soupy Sales Show* which has become a highly sought after Soupy collectible and is presently valued at about $40-60 in FN to VF condition. Because so many of the albums were played by kids (and therefore badly scratched) it's important to check the "play-ability" of the vinyl as well as inspecting the condition of the album cover.

1965 saw the release of *The Official Soupy Sales Comic Book Magazine* #1 which featured his show, the Archie gang and Soupy in a few humorous vignettes, and Soupy's dance craze satire "the Mouse" ("hey, do the mouse, yeah! Hey, you can do it in your house, Yeah!"). This wonderful piece of esoteric nostalgia presently Guides for $8 in GD, $24 in FN, and $80 in NM. ■

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